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February 2003

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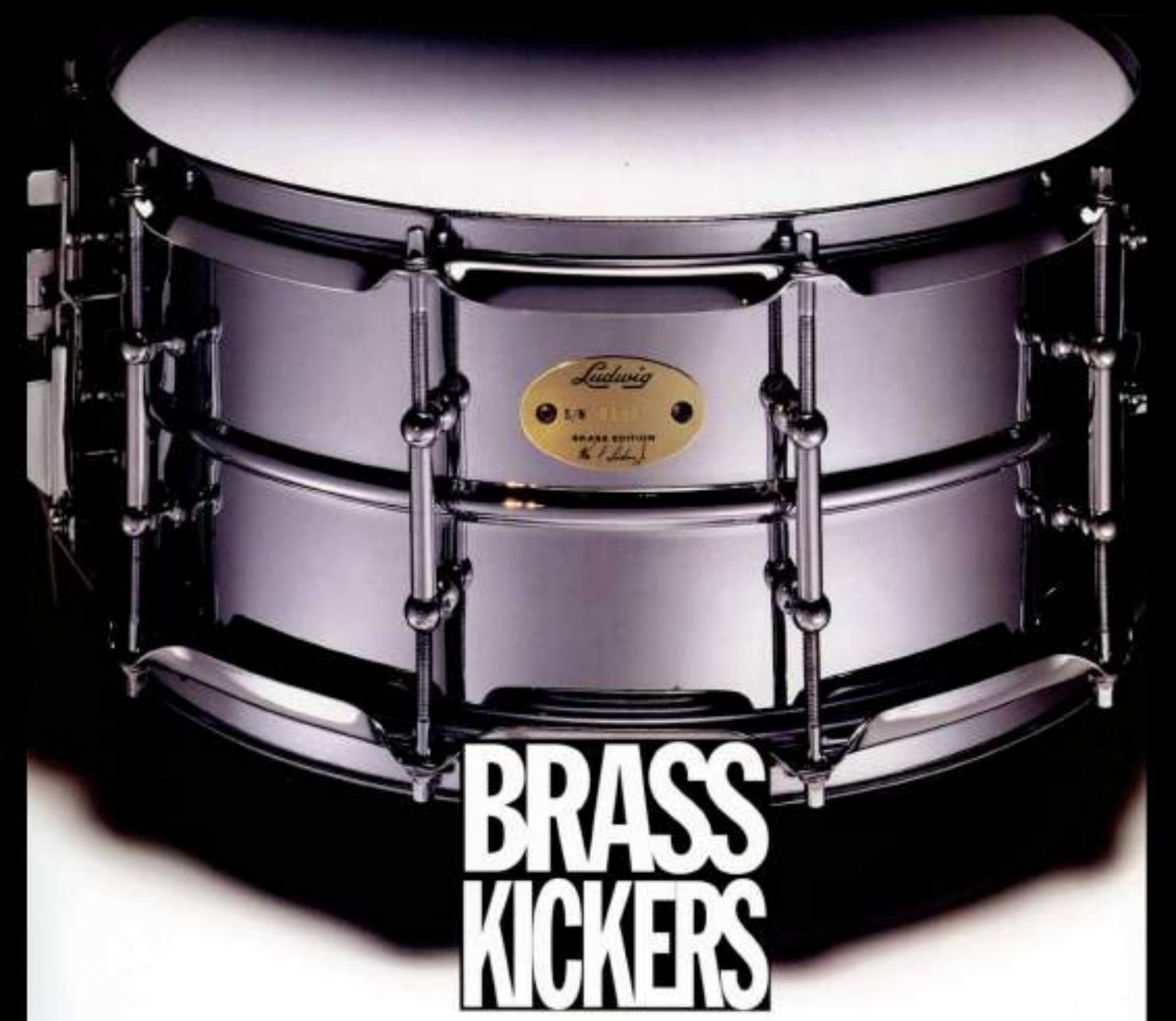

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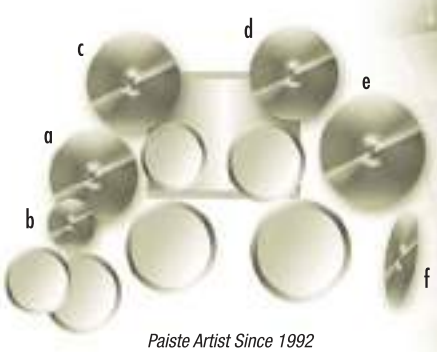

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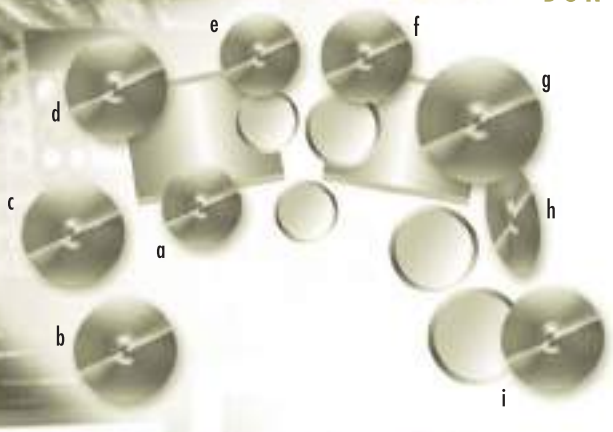

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Paiste Artist Since 2002

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Dig

Sometimes I think we're a little naive. As the editors of *Modern Drummer*, we go through the daily business of putting together a magazine for readers who have only one thing in common: the drums. But in the specialized world we live in today, there's a magazine or Web site for any sub-sub-genre you can think of, in any field of interest. So we'd *have* to be naive to think we can appeal to any person, in any segment of society, as long as they like to hit things with sticks.

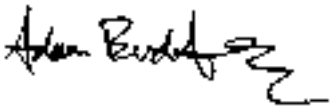
But when it comes to deciding who and what to cover in *MD*, our only concern is whether there's something cool for drummers in the story. Education, sex, race, income, age—these things matter very little when you're sitting ten feet from Elvin Jones at the Blue Note, engulfed by his polyrhythmic maelstrom. Or if you catch a Tool video on M2, and you're pinned to your seat by Danny Carey's NASA-worthy number games.

Perhaps this is why we're always baffled when somebody writes in, after we covered this artist or that, complaining simply because that player's band has a funny name, or they have tattoos, or, God forbid, they have a hit record on the charts. Doesn't *everybody* think like us? At the end of the day, isn't it only about the *music*?

I've been thinking a lot about this dilemma since I started working on this month's cover story with Spüg of Mudvayne. To the casual music fan, Mudvayne is another in a seemingly endless train of made-for-MTV bands featuring loud guitars, scary makeup, and the weight of the world on their shoulders. But wait. Listen. Isn't that guitar riff in 5/4, while the drums are in straight time? And, man, that bass player has some serious chops. Those lyrics are kinda deep, too.

After speaking to Spüg for all of two minutes, it became very clear to me that this was not your cliché modern rock star. Yes, he has thousands of rabid teenage fans. But he also has ideas. He has plans. He has talent. He has humor. He has diverse interests. He has a vision for himself and for his art. He has really good taste in music.

And, sad to say, he'll have detractors who, scared off by the funny names, scary makeup, and loud guitars, will likely never listen carefully to his music. Their loss. Those who know that in order to discover the real deal, you have to dig a little, will benefit from the music he plays, and the words he says. At least, that's what we naive editors are banking on.



MODERN DRUMMER

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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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Zach Lind

Your November cover story about Zach Lind of Jimmy Eat World was refreshing. I don't know anything about their music (yet), but it's nice to see a guy not riddled with tattoos and piercings just talk drums without relying on costumes, foul language, dabbling in the occult, or how many cymbals, heads, and sticks he can break in a single show. Zach's understanding of a drummer's purpose, his humility amid success, and his realization that one can always improve as a player also makes for a class act. Keep it up Mr. Lind!

Scott McBean
via Internet

I want to start out by saying that *MD* is a fine publication. Still, (unfortunately), this will be perceived as a gripe letter. I'm fully aware that *MD* must cover artists of all genres, even if their band will most likely be lost in the annals of history. It's just unfortunate that some of these players give the impression that playing drums is their "job" rather than their all-consuming passion. Let's start with November's cover artist, Zach Lind of Jimmy Eat World. The interview is yet another "Drums are there to support, never to be the focal point" sermon.

Shouldn't a drummer's soul and identity be a contribution to the music? After all, Tony Williams was asked to play in Miles Davis's band because Miles wanted Tony's *fire*, not because he needed 2 and 4 to support everyone else.

In the feature on Thomas Lang in the same issue, the interviewer seems to take the position that Thomas doesn't need his remarkable technique to play the pop gigs he's doing. To his credit, Thomas replies that it's necessary to be technically adept in order to play *any* style of music.

To all of the drummers who are on the VH1 Top 20 video countdown (and the cover of *Modern Drummer*): While you're on stage or in the studio playing your—as Mike Malinin put it in his August 2002 interview—"obnoxious" instrument: There are thousands of us out here looking to you as inspiration, whether you want it or not. So please, have some respect when you're voicing your opinion about an instrument that I and others like me have spent precious hours learning to play, and who genuinely give a damn about its place in music.

Felix R. Bellido De Luna
via Internet

Gary Chester

Thank you for remembering my father, Gary Chester, in your November issue. I've had numerous calls and emails from people like Kenny Aronoff and others saying how beautiful the story is. He will now be known to the thousands of *MD* readers. That means a lot to me—and to my dad. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

Katrina Chester
via Internet

Great write up on Gary. I was fortunate enough to study with him for several years in the 1970s and '80s, and I have great memories of his teachings, philosophies, and stories. Gary was a great teacher, a caring person, and a tremendous influence on drummers all over the world.

Mike Beckley
via Internet

Drumming For The New Duos

Kudos for the section on Ed Livengood in your "Drumming For The New Duos" feature. I was privileged to meet Ed at a small club in Macon, Georgia a few years back, and I was totally blown away by Jucifer's sound. Not only was Ed one of the most amazing drummers I've ever seen, but his down-to-earth personality really impressed me. Even though he was suffering from the flu, he managed to give 100%-plus on stage—and still take time out to talk shop with an unknown like myself. Was he complaining about how he felt? No. I only found out about his illness later from the club owner. Ed even inspired me to dust off my Vistalites and start playing again! Thanks for recognizing a drummer who truly deserves it.

Wally Peacock
via Internet

In your "New Duos" story, Cash Audio drummer Scott Giampino says, "I'm half the band, so I have to give people something to latch onto, as opposed to just playing John Bonham." I believe legions of drummers and non-drummers alike would agree that John Bonham gave all of us plenty to "latch onto." As a pivotal force and legend who redefined the art of drumming, John Bonham didn't exactly "just play." Smarten up, Mr. Giampino. Perhaps a romp through history via past issues of *MD* and a little listen to Led Zeppelin is in order?

Scott McBean
via Internet

Defending Mike

Chris Houdart's November 2002 *Readers' Platform* comment regarding Mike Malinin's August cover story has me confused. Is this the same Mr. Houdart who's sold several million CDs, or who plays to thousands of people a day? Probably neither, because any true drummer understands the importance of style and variety.

I enjoy Mike Malinin's playing precisely because it's playable. It's driving. It has dynamics. And he is one third of the reason the Goo Goo Dolls are having such great success. When Mr. Houdart has his picture on the cover of *MD*, the readers can take note of his insight. In the meantime, to Mr. Malinin: Great job! Keep up the good work.

Jeff Hampton
via Internet

I'll admit that I don't get as excited seeing Zach Lind or Mike Malinin gracing the front of my favorite publication as I do when I see someone like Elvin Jones there. But not everybody can be an Elvin or a Vinnie or a Neil. And let's not forget that guys like Zach and Mike generate a lot of interest among younger readers, who represent a large market. Once inside, those readers then get exposed to the ever-present "masters," along with a

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plethora of information, tips, and exercises. Besides that, the "latest guys" usually shed some insight on "making it" in today's music biz. So don't judge *MD* just by its cover; read each and every page. There's a lot in there, month after month.

George Fleischer
Jacksonville, FL

Building Your Own Drumset

Although the chances that I'll ever build my own drumkit are less than those of a meteor striking Earth, I think Paul Bielewicz's series on building one's own drumset is your best technical piece since "MD's Guide to Drumset Tuning" in the November 1999 issue.

Mr. Bielewicz has thrown a fascinating light onto what makes a drumset and how it works. In fact, the series is a hands-on introduction to all the parts and pieces of the drumkit, while clearly showing their purpose and how they interact together (and with the drummer, too). Congratulations.

Javier Diaz
Santiago, Chile

Zoomatic Strainer Repair

In Harry Cangany's November 2002 *It's Questionable* answer to the problem a reader was experiencing with a slipping Zoomatic strainer arm, Harry said that Loctite could not be used, since the threads need to move. Having been a mechanic for twenty-five years (as well as a drummer), I'm happy to tell you about a Loctite product that will do what the reader needs it to do. That product is a retainer that is blue in color and only keeps the threads from backing off from vibrations (as opposed to securing them permanently). The reader should be able to find this version in small quantities in any auto parts store.

Steve Scherrep
Roanoke, VA

Thanks From Gary

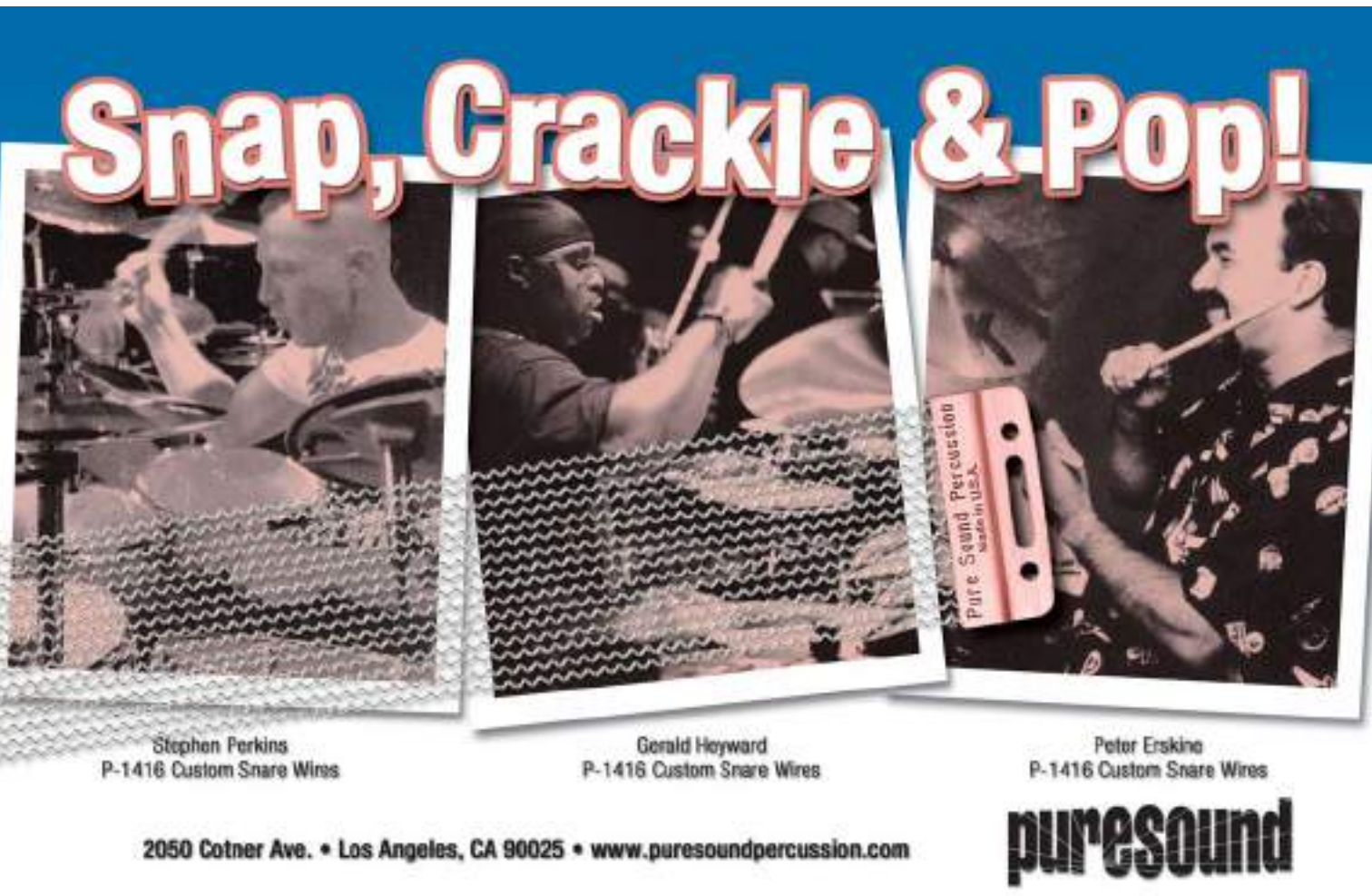
My thanks to Rod Fogarty and *Modern Drummer* for the kind words in the April 2002 "Jazz/Rock Pioneers" story regarding my drumming with Chase. I'm sorry to be so long in responding; the article only came to my attention recently.

I was inspired by the technique and musicality of Billy Cobham and Bobby Colomby, and I'm flattered to be included in that story with them, as well as with Chicago's great Danny Seraphine, and the other fine drummers who played with Chase: Jay Burrid and Tom Gordon.

Thanks also for recognizing Bill Chase's contribution to music. He was a consummate performer who is still an inspiration to many, especially those of us who had an opportunity to play with him.

Finally, I'd like to mention that Chase had another drummer, Walter Clark. As I understand, Walter was a favorite of Bill's, but as far as I know he never recorded with the band. Tragically, Walter was killed in the plane crash that also took the lives of Bill Chase and two other bandmembers, along with the pilot and co-pilot.

Gary Smith
via Internet



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Carmine Through The Years

Congratulations to Carmine Appice on the "Through the Years" feature in your October 2002 issue. It was great to see the historic photos. I met Carmine in New Zealand back in 1988. Even though I was a "nobody," he was lovely to me. Thank you for the memory.

Peter Dent
via Internet

Drummers In The Fight

I haven't missed an issue of *MD* since I started reading in 1988, but your magazine has never come in handy as much as it does now. I'm currently stationed on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, where my job is to maintain the cockpit electronics to keep our planes flying. Since I'm 10,000 miles away from my drums, the only way for me to keep in touch with what is going on in the drumming world is to read your magazine. Though we do have drumsets on board, it's hard to acquire new drumheads and other necessary equipment out in the middle of nowhere. Luckily, I picked up a guitar and a digital recorder a couple of years ago. With those I'm currently learning and creating music on board the ship. In fact, your "Understanding The Language Of Music" articles have helped me to understand chords and keys.

"MD's 2002 Product Extravaganza" [June 2002 issue] depicted a Dunnett Classic snare drum dedicated to Mark Bingham, who died on Flight 93 on September 11th, 2001. It got me thinking: A drummer was there to fight the terrorists at the very beginning, and now a year later drummers are still fighting against those same terrorists. I share a workspace with two other drummers and three guitar players. I've been using *Modern Drummer* to help me teach guitar *and* drums to several friends. So I just wanted to thank you for all the great articles you've published for drummers around the world who want to learn, teach, or be inspired.

Aaron Wright
via Internet

Drumming Saves Lives

Back in 1994, *MD*'s Ron Spagnardi and Rick Van Horn and Pearl's Gene Okamoto helped me to obtain a drumkit for the Eddyville Kentucky Penitentiary, where I was incarcerated. Fortunately, I'm lucky enough to be in a state that lets inmates play music, so I have lots of time to woodshed.

Today, I teach the guys here to play drums—four hours a day. I've been "inside" since 1975, and I see a lot of guys leave here—and then come back. The interesting part is, the ones that I teach to play drums *don't* come back. With students who really want to learn, I teach them that you play better straight. When they get out, they quit using drugs in order to pursue their playing.

I'm not blowing my own horn. I'm just stating the fact that even in this living hell, playing drums has saved my sanity. And now it's saving the younger guys' lives. Keep the faith!

Marty Ardizzone
Green River Correctional Complex
Central City, KY

How To Reach Us

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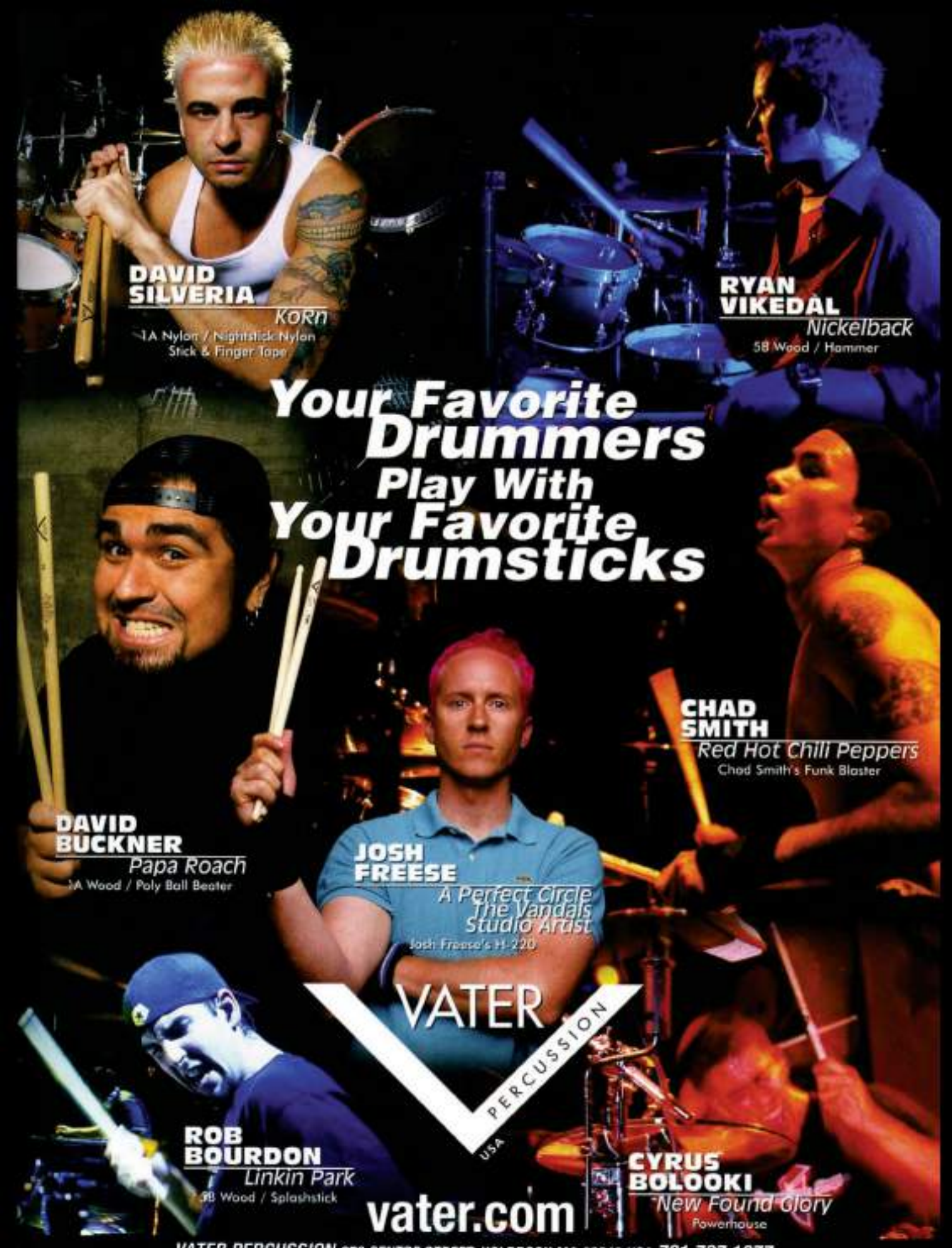
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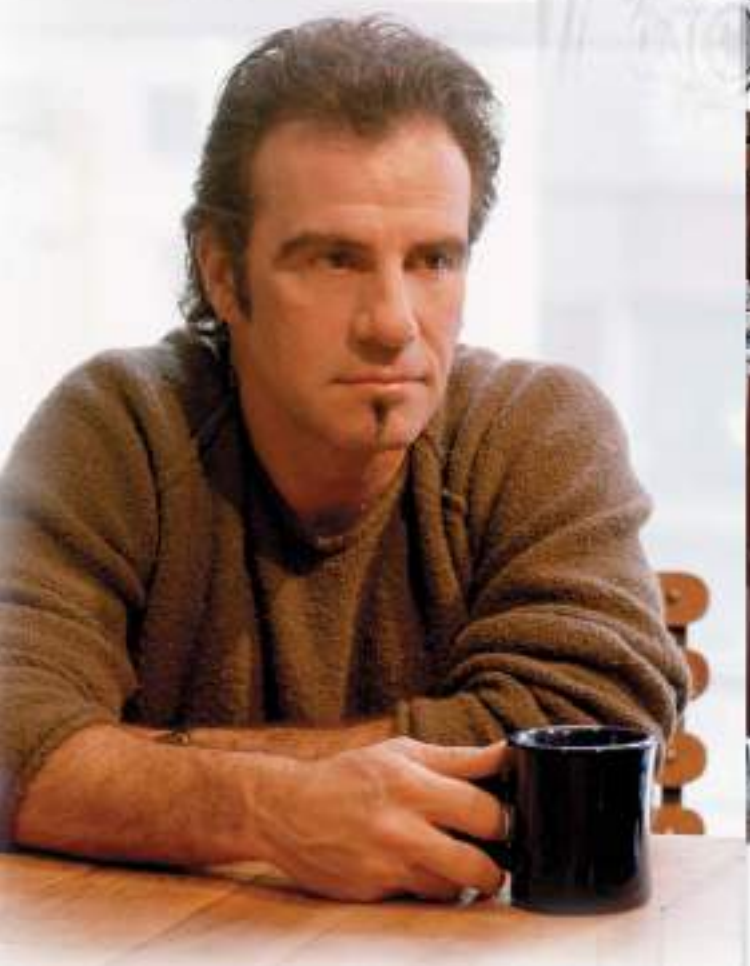

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Vinnie Colaiuta's "Brand New" Groove

Q I'm a huge fan of Sting, and I especially enjoy the music he did with you on drums. It seems to me like the song "Brand New Day" starts with a drum machine and fades over to live drums on the second chorus. Is this the case, and if so, how did you do it? The drum sound is identical on each part.

Tore Sandbakken
Trondheim, Norway

Alex Solca

A Thanks for your support, Tore. Yes, "Brand New Day" started with a drum machine. I put the headphones on, waited until a certain point in the song, then just started playing. As far as the consistency of the sound goes, well...that's great engineering! I got a good headphone mix, so that the balance between me, the rest of the music, and the drum machine and click were good.

Because the acoustic drums are usually so loud in the room, a good headphone mix is very important. I recommend "closed" headphones if you can get them, because they block out more ambient sound. I also suggest that you practice grooving with a drum machine by playing a song that you know along with the machine. That way, you'll be playing fills and different sections and dynamics with the machine, instead of just one groove. That should help you to feel a lot more "musical" with the machine. Happy drumming, and God bless you.

Virgil Donati On Hand And Foot Groupings

Q At a recent clinic I saw you play a really interesting drumbeat. You played a five-stroke pattern on the kick, with your feet flamming the first and third notes of each five-beat grouping, while (I believe) your hands were playing in a measure of four. Could you specify the foot pattern that you use to play this? Is it: L/R L L/R R L, L/R L L/R L R, (where L/R equals a flam with a left grace note and a right main stroke) or something entirely different? Any other information on the application of the hands while this is going on in the feet would be most welcome.

Jeff Michael Knowles
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Alex Solca

A I'm glad you found some inspiration from the clinic. The correct foot pattern for this groove is: L/R L L/R L R, R/L R R/L R L. As you observed, the hands were playing in 4/4, and the feet also play these groups of five beats in 4/4, as 16th notes. Therefore the pattern with the feet will be "across the barline."

Learning to play odd-note groupings in 4/4 time is a difficult but very interesting and effective skill to develop. It's important to count and eventually learn to feel the 4/4 meter while playing across the barline with the odd grouping. Using this example, you can begin by simply playing quarter notes with the hands and slowly begin to vary the sticking and the syncopation. Also, playing a straight groove will help you to feel the meter. Cheers!

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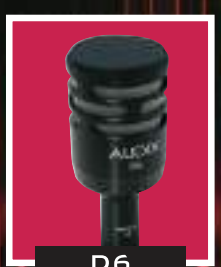

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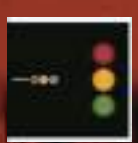

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Tracking With **Scott Rockenfield**

Q I've been a big fan of yours for many years, and your drumming has been a major influence on my own. I know that you use some type of click track when you play live. Since purchasing the *Live Evolution* DVD, I see more clearly that you actually have a feed into your in-ear monitor system from a device located next to you. Can you explain how that works? Is it an actual click track, or are you listening to a part of the song? In either case, does it provide a starting tempo for the count-off and then go into the song? I'm very interested in this technology. Thanks for the years of great playing.

Jeff Henry
Tampa, FL

A Thanks very much for your kind words. I'm pleased that you've enjoyed my work through the years.

The answer to your question regarding my in-ear monitors and a click track is "yes." The music in Queensrÿche has always been filled with an assortment of sound effects, orchestrations, and percussion loops. In our quest to re-create our recordings for live presentations, I need to be "in sync" with all of the devices that play back those sounds. I've also had to be in sync with film that we project on the rear screens of the stage.

We use an assortment of equipment for all of this, but the main playback devices have so far been Tascam digital tape machines that have the sound effects and orchestrations on the main tracks, the click on an isolated track, and SMPTE time code on a "sub" track that drives the film projectors. It's all very high-tech, but so far no worries! And yes, the click track always has a count-off for me to have a cue for the songs.

If you'd like more info about my work, please visit www.rockenfieldmusic.com. Best of luck!

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Jeff Watts, November 1999

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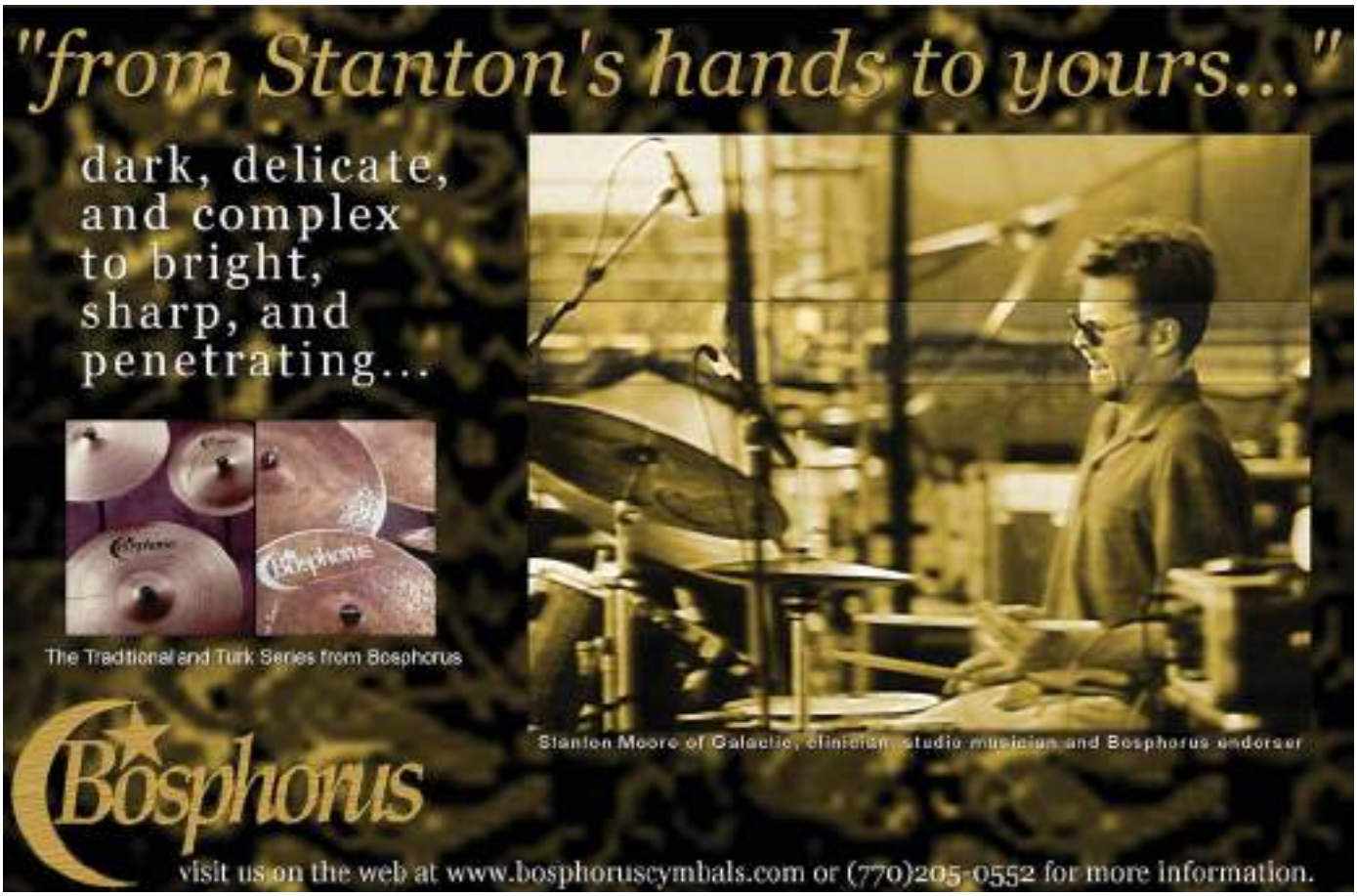

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"Cheap" Transcription

Q I recently got back behind a kit for the first time in nearly ten years, and this time I'm doing it the right way by taking lessons and learning how to read music. Although the main focus of my studies is reading and rudiments, I have also been playing along with songs in my headphones. The one that has given me the most grief is the classic "Cheap Sunglasses" by ZZ Top. Frank Beard is doing some incredible playing during that song. Is there any way that you could transcribe it for me?

Keith Hamilton
Canton, OH

A Unfortunately, we don't have room for a full transcription of "Cheap Sunglasses" here. However, we suggest that since you're working on learning how to read, you get together with your teacher and use the process of transcribing "Cheap Sunglasses" as a learning exercise. Listen to it in sections, have your teacher identify exactly what Frank Beard is playing, and jot down the transcription. This exercise is like learning to read "in reverse." First you figure out what is being played, then you learn what that looks like on paper. This is a great way to train yourself to recognize written musical figures and patterns.

Mighty Max's Rides

Q Could you tell me what ride cymbal (brand, model, and size) Max Weinberg uses with Bruce Springsteen's E Street band?

Stephen
via Internet

A According to Zildjian's John DeChristopher, "Max uses a 20" A Rock ride with Bruce. For *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*, he tends to use lighter cymbals. The ride is a beautiful-sounding 20" A from the 1950s. I've sent him a number of rides over the years, which I believe he's used at different times.

"Max's live setup with Bruce includes 14" A Mastersound hi-hats, a 17" A medium-thin crash, the 20" A Rock ride, and an 18" A medium crash."

Psychedelic Ludwigs

Q I'm trying to get a price/value on a six-piece set of Ludwig drums finished in their classic Psychedelic Red. There are two 14x20 bass drums, 8x12 and 9x13 toms mounted on a floor stand, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5½x14 Supraphonic snare drum. The date stamped inside the drum shells reads, "December 12, 1968." Can you provide an estimate?

Toni Avila
via Internet

A Our drum historian, Harry Cangany, responds, "The value depends on a lot of factors, including the condition of the finish and the chrome, and the presence of any changes, such as extra holes for add-ons that are not factory-original. I'd estimate the value as ranging from $900 to $1,400, depending on the answers to those questions. Psychedelic Red is a sought-after finish that brings more than most other Ludwig finishes. On the other hand, Supraphonic snare drums are very common, and are worth about $150 these days, unless they are made of brass."

Solving Drum Machine Problems

Q I'm a working drummer in a cover band, in which I use a DW acoustic kit and electronics. In addition to a Roland SPD-11 multipad unit and a Pole Pad, I also use two Boss DR-660 drum machines and a Boss DR-770. Why? The 660s ran out of memory after seven or eight songs. The 770 has four times the memory and has served me well.

My problem is that the songs in the 660s can't be dumped into the 770. So, I'm stuck with a lot of equipment. On top of that, my keyboard player sends me a click and sequences from his Korg T-2 through one of the 660s. Another problem is that I've cracked the display of my 770. It still

What's A "Studio" Kit?

Q I was browsing drumsets online the other day and found a kit I was interested in. It was listed as a "studio" drumset. Is there a big difference between a regular drumset and a studio set?

James Saunders
via Internet

A The difference between a "regular" set and a "studio" set is largely the marketing nomenclature used by the manufacturer. Drums made of certain wood types (notably birch) are promoted as being good for recording. Smaller-sized drums are also touted as being good for use in the studio. So kits featuring those woods or those drum sizes are often marketed as "studio" models. However, *any* quality drumkit that's tuned and miked properly can be successfully recorded, making it a "studio" kit in reality.

Steve Gadd helped popularize the concept of "studio" drumkits in the 1980s, by playing a Yamaha Recording Custom kit with birch shells, small rack toms, and suspended small-sized "floor" toms.

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works, but until I get it fixed, only the tempo displays.

My thinking at this point is, if I'm going to replace the 770 for $350, why not spend $1,400 and get the Roland TD-10 sound module? But while I'm familiar with the sound module, I'm not familiar with its sequencing capabilities. So I'd like to know a couple of things.

1. Can the TD-10 take the place of my three Boss boxes? I know I'd probably need to expand it, but how is the sequencer?

2. If the TD-10 can replace the Boss machines, will the Boss boxes be able to dump their sequences into the TD-10 so I don't have to re-invent the wheel?

Dan Hertlein
via Internet

A Roland percussion product manager Steve Fisher sent us the following information. "First, if you need to get sequence data from your DR-660 into your DR-770 (or vice versa), you can record the patterns in real-time from one unit to the other. Make sure you have the unit recording in MIDI sync. It does take some time, but it's faster than programming everything again.

"As for your specific questions...

1. Since the TD-10 is designed as a percussion sound module, it will cover the sounds from the Boss units, but not the functions of them. The TD-10's sequencer is more of an 'idea generator' or scratch pad for recording drum, percussion, and instrument riffs. It's limited in memory size, and although it has patterns, there is no song mode. Also, to achieve the same job as your SPD-11, you would have to purchase six separate pads to trigger the sounds from the TD-10.

2. Similar to what I mentioned above, if you did want to transfer some of your drum machine patterns to the TD-10, you could record them in real-time into it."

Drumming Shoes

Q I've been a gigging drummer for seventeen years. In all that time, I've never been able to find a pair of shoes that felt "right" while I was playing. I currently wear an old pair of Nike cross-trainers because they're light and worn and allow me the fastest response on the bass and hi-hat pedals. Unfortunately, they look pretty crappy, and my band likes to dress up for shows. I find, though, that most formal shoes have thick soles that seriously slow down my feet. I've tried a lot of different shoes over the years, including dressier fare with hard, thin soles, indoor soccer shoes, running shoes, high tops (definitely a no), and Doc Martens. Do you have any suggestions?

Jeff Derringer
New York, NY

A You might try men's dance shoes for theatrical stage use. They come in models designed to look like regular men's dress shoes, but with very thin soles and more flexible "uppers" than real dress shoes. They might give you the light feel and flexibility that you enjoy with your beat-up Nikes, while providing the "dressy" appearance appropriate for your band's shows.

Capezio is the most famous dance-shoe brand, but there are others. You should be able to find them in major shoe stores, or you can check with a local dance studio or on line for a source.

Home-Made Lug Gaskets

Q I'm planning on building a kit with lug casings from an older kit that I have. The lug casings have no insulation between the metal and the shell. Is this easy to do?

Gary
via Internet

A Creating isolation "gaskets" between the lugs and the shells is not difficult. You can purchase regular fiber gasket material from any auto parts store. Or you can use thin sheet rubber or plastic. Just trace around each lug casing, then cut the gasket slightly larger than your tracing (to make sure the lug sits *on* the gasket). Also mark where the holes need to be for attaching the gasket/lug assembly to the shell. If you cut carefully, the gaskets should be nearly invisible.

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Bon Jovi's
Tico Torres
Working Hard Every Day

How do you celebrate twenty years in the music business? Well, for Bon Jovi, they've done it by releasing their eighth studio record, *Bounce*, which will undoubtedly add to their impressive album sales figures, at this point totaling over one hundred million records. Not too shabby for the New Jersey rockers—but for them, it's not just about selling records. The band has worked hard in the past, and apparently now is working even harder. "We rehearse more now than we have in years," drummer Tico Torres admits, "which is good. It kind of gets you greased up a little bit."

Through Bon Jovi's twenty-plus years together, more than 31 million people in 47 countries have witnessed the full effect of Tico's powerful and rock-solid drumming. On record he'll only play what's important to the song. But live he gets to stretch a bit. According to Tico, "That's one of the best things about seeing any band live; you get to see other directions. It kind of gives you something else to listen for. Plus these guys are strong songwriters. I believe in that. On record, I play for the song instead of being a drummer's drummer. I try to be one of the musicians in the song."

So how does one stay motivated after years playing many of the same songs? "I love playing live," Tico says. "A song like 'Wanted Dead Or Alive' has a lot of emotion to it. Then there's the trashier stuff like 'Hey God,' which is a lot of fun to play. 'Keep The Faith' is always fun, too. And I like our power ballads, because I get to do my little signature riffs in them."

As we speak, there's no slowing down for Bon Jovi, as they tour the world to promote *Bounce*. Tico sums it up: "I've been playing drums for thirty-five years. I love doing it. We love doing it as a band, and if we didn't, we wouldn't keep on doing it."

Billy Amendola

Patty Schemel
Lucid Drumming

Patty Schemel is back behind the drums with a full dance card that includes an album of material with the experimental Lucid Nation, writing sessions with her former bandmate Courtney Love, studio dates with Linda Perry, and even a tour with her longtime friends in Imperial Teen. Toss in a movie score here, a one-off session there, and Schemel, who quit Hole back in 1998 and put the drums away for a time, is now one busy drummer.

While the Love writing sessions are moving forward, with both the singer and drummer bringing in ideas to record, Schemel found herself in a far different vibe while recording the Lucid Nation *Tacoma Ballet* release. "That was totally free," she says. "We just got together in a room and did this freestyle thing, and then they constructed that material into a song. It was kind of cool that there were no rules or parts."

To her credit, Schemel reports that working without rules wasn't intimidating. "I like it because there are always ideas that I have—interesting beats and such—that I never could incorporate into Hole or any other project. In Lucid Nation, I got to incorporate all of my weirdness."

As for one song that best exemplifies that approach, Schemel points to "Welcome To America," a tune that she started before the band jumped in. "It was this complete collective consciousness," she says, "where everybody started and then merged into a song. It was like a painting, where you just throw a bunch of paint on a canvas and it turns out in some kind of complete form that's strange. That was totally cool."

Over the years, Schemel has pretty much stuck to a regular four-piece DW kit with a 22" kick and a Craviotto snare. For the Love sessions, she added two floor toms and a handful of extra cymbals to mix it up. "If I'm playing something during a song and I have something extra on the kit, it can inspire a different idea," Schemel explains. "The newest thing, which I never thought I'd use in a million years, was another kick drum. But I found myself trying double kick a bit too much. Pretty soon everything started to sound like 'Hot For Teacher.' [laughs] So I had to get it out of there."

David John Farinella

Derek Roddy Speed Eternal

For southern Florida–based drummer Derek Roddy, playing drums is an obsession. With his extreme metal band, Hate Eternal, Derek clocks in single-stroke double bass patterns at an average speed of around 250 bpm. "I can hit 260 bpm on a good day," Roddy says. "Most of the Hate Eternal music is over the 200 bpm mark. The title track of our latest release, *King Of All Kings*, is a solid 250 bpm for just over three minutes—with no breaks."

Roddy credits his incredible speed to hard work, dedication, his Axis foot pedals, and a device called the Drumometer. Roddy explains, "It's a great tool for measuring your progress. It's like a video game. You can't stop until you defeat it. It's really addictive. But I don't feel that speed is everything. In fact, I don't think it's important at all, outside of this style of music."

In regards to his Axis pedals, Roddy explains, "The Axis Longboard foot pedal is the fastest and smoothest pedal on the market. Chains and straps don't cut it. Their boards jump when you get them up to speed. Axis is the only pedal with a solid bar that is a direct link to the beater. This stops the pedal board from jumping and causing friction against motion. I can't get any other

pedal above 230 bpm, but I have no problem reaching that, and beyond, with the Axis.

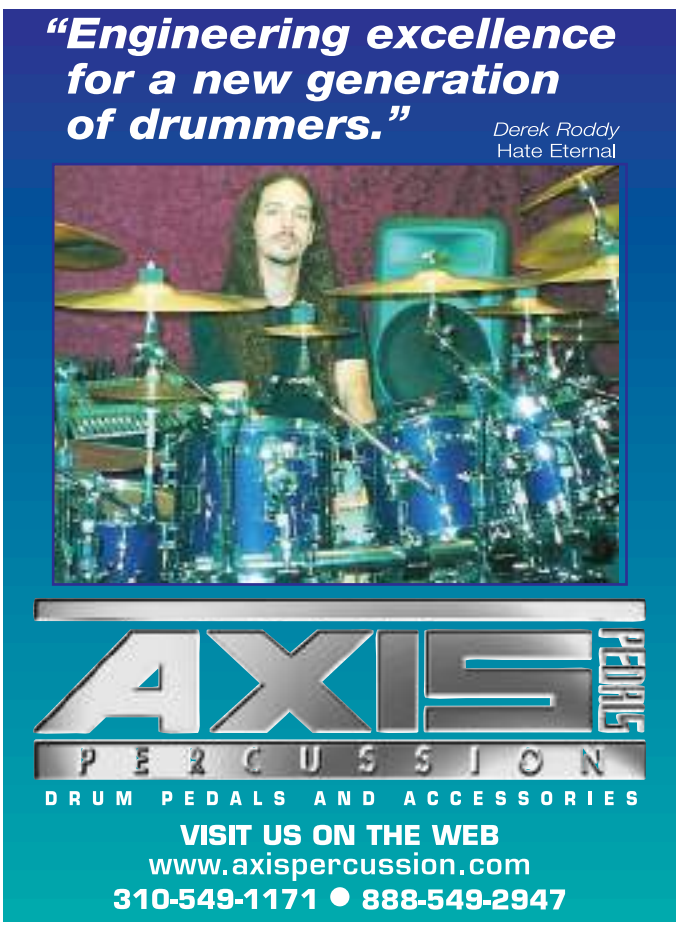
"I have the spring tension set as tight as I can get it," Derek continues. "That way the beater comes right off the head. Loose spring tension also causes friction and pedal-board jump."

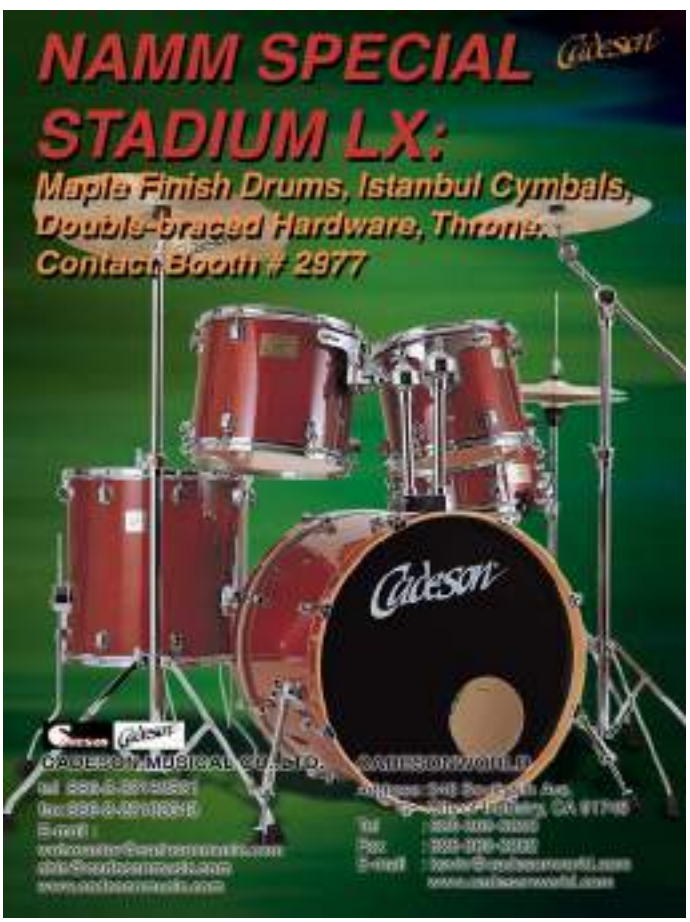
Roddy's foot pedal technique is as unique as his speed. "I play the exact opposite of 'heel down,'" he explains. "I put my foot flat on the pedal board, just lifting my heels, keeping the ball of my foot on the pedal board at all times. I have a quirky 'side-to-side' motion I use to get the beater to the head. Instead of lifting my whole leg to pick up my heel, I pivot my ankle from side-to-side as if I was pushing a button on the right and left side of the heel plate of the pedal. This technique cuts your physical motion in half, saves energy, and makes it easier to play longer."

Despite his mastery of speed, Roddy plays many styles of music with other bands. He also owns the studio where Hate Eternal recorded *King Of All Kings*. Derek engineers his own drums, which includes triggering bass drum samples of his own making. Roddy explains, "I trigger the bass drums because there's so much air moving inside when you're playing fast that with just a microphone it turns into an indistinguishable rumble. With a trigger, you hear every note because it's a constant signal. I don't trigger anything else. I work hard to make sure all my strokes are the same volume. Playing at a consistent volume is very important with extreme metal."

Roddy proudly concludes, "I've never used Pro Tools to 'fix' or 'clean up' my drum parts on anything I've ever recorded." Derek has a mail order instructional video, *Endurance And Strength Builder*, available on the Internet at www.hateeternal.com.

Mike Haid





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Chicago's

Tris Imboden

Slammin' Side Project

What began as a lark for Tris Imboden and musician friend Keith Howland ended up sounding too good to discard. When bassist Lance Morrison entered the picture, they began cutting material in Howland's home studio for what ended up being called *The Howland Imboden Project*. (Tris jokes that he originally wanted to call the disc *Warts And All*.)

"We were messing around in Keith's studio," Tris says, "and at the time I had no idea it was going to be a record. We'd write a song on the spot, and as soon as we got a track that didn't have a massive clam on the drums, that would be the take. But I really didn't feel like I truly learned the tunes to take proper aim. And then Keith and Lance were able to work on coming up with perfect performances while I was out with Chicago, so I was a little reticent about making anyone aware of this record."

Imboden describes the music as "all over the map. There are a couple of semi-Latin pieces and the obligatory power shuffle—all instrumental with a lot of playing—if not by me, definitely by Keith, who is a brilliant guitarist." The disc also ended up featuring most of the members of Chicago on various tracks. "It's been very well received," Tris reports. "And there are some great performances on it, even though I don't consider mine to be exactly polished."

Imboden hasn't had many opportunities to work on outside projects because his work with Chicago is so demanding. Celebrating their thirty-fifth anniversary, the band continues to draw major crowds and great reviews. Even a recent Rhino compilation—*The Very Best Of Chicago*—entered the charts in the Top-40. After twelve years with the band, Tris says he still feels honored to be a part of such a rich musical legacy. And playing such prestigious gigs as the Memorial Day concert on the west lawn of the Capitol building makes it that much more special.

"The band is sounding better than ever," Tris says. "We work so much that we're very tight. But for some reason everyone seems to be really inspired this year. It's really a joy." And to cap off the year, after the band completed its seven-month tour, Tris and longtime girlfriend Kelly Muchoney tied the knot. Congratulations!

Robyn Flans

Darren Lyons

The Day Gig That Kept On Giving

Darren Lyons wasn't in a rush to quit his day gig as a New York City club employee back in the early '80s. One day Peter Erskine would be setting up his kit. The next it might be Steve Jordan or Al Foster. Then, at the end of the night, when Darren had stacked all the chairs, he'd sit down at their kits, all the while accumulating the impressive chops he now uses leading The Darren Lyons Group.

"That club was Seventh Avenue South," Darren reveals. "Sometimes it would shock me when I'd play other drummers' kits. Erskine's toms, for example, sounded padded down out front, but they were very live behind the kit. And Jordan really detuned a lug on his 10" tom, but somehow it still had a nice ring."

Lyons put this "learning by osmosis" to good use on his recent album, *Resonator*. In addition, he had conventional instruction from elusive jazzer Michael DiPasqua. And years ago, when Peter Erskine kept an apartment on 23rd Street, Darren would stop by for master classes. "Mike Lauren was also a very good teacher," Darren adds, "as was Joe Cusatis at the Modern Drum Shop."

As for *Resonator*, it came *this* close to being a train wreck, thanks to flawed engineering decisions such as, in one instance, gating the overhead mic's. Salvation appeared in the form of engineer John Arrias (Jeff Beck's *Wired*, Little Feat, and Barbra Streisand). "He brought things to life in the mix," Darren enthuses. "And he's agreed to do our next disc." Darren will post progress on that front at www.darrenlyons.com.

Speaking of Lyons' home page, bet you can't identify the flashy red kit with gold lugs he's shown playing there. The drums are the Modern Drum Shop house brand. "In New York," says Darren, "everybody is still looking for the Tony Williams sound. But when they hear my drums they just love 'em."

Darren's next road is a detour. "Since everybody pigeonholes our group as a fusion band," he says, "we're going to do a live quartet jazz album. If Miles were alive he'd never go back to that stuff, but I'm doing it to prove a point."

T. Bruce Wittet

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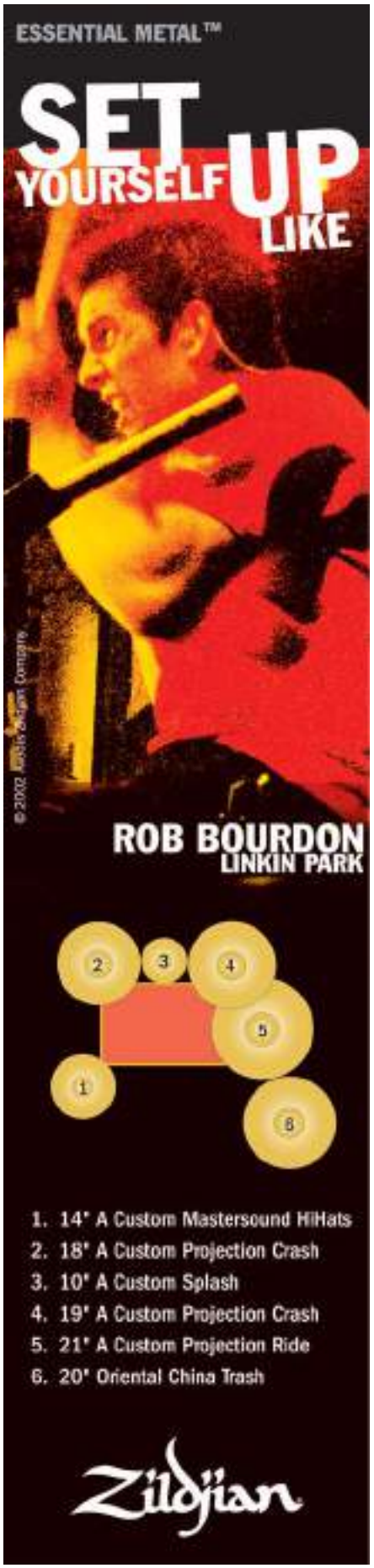

NEWS

Matt Chamberlain is on tour with Tori Amos.

Shawn Pelton is on Joan Osborne's *How Sweet It Is*, as well as former J. Geils front man Peter Wolf's new solo CD, *Sleepless*. **Charlie Drayton** is also on two tracks on Wolf's release.

Jim Keltner recently played the George Harrison tribute concert at London's Royal Albert Hall.

Will Calhoun has been touring Europe with sax legend Pharoah Sanders.

Bobby Rondinelli is on Blue Öyster Cult's live CD and DVD/VHS release, *A Long Day's Night*.

Rod Morgenstein, **Jonathan Mover**, and **Mike Portnoy** are on *Rama 1* by Andy West & Rama.

Terry Bozzio takes a turn at the mic' (and, of course, on the kit) on his duet album with bassist Billy Sheehan, *Nine Short Films*.

Chris Howard and **Mark Zonder** are on Under-Radio's self-titled new album.

Mike Terrana is on Tony Hernando's *The Shades Of Truth*.

Martin Chambers is on the new Pretenders CD, *Loose Screw*.

Mike Mangini, **Steve Haas**, and **David Vargus** are on Chris Emerson's *Tourist*.

Anders Mogensen *Trio Live* is the new one from the drummer-led group.

Drummer/sculptor **Steve Hubback**'s latest is called *Best Kept Secret*.

Bob Kaufman is on Dino Govoni's *In The Library*.

Wes Crawford takes a unique approach on his disc *A Rhythmic Murder Mystery*, on which he performs live improvs on a Roland electronic drumset, inserting clues into the music for listeners to solve a dramatic mystery. (www.wescrawford.com)

Jeff Cummings is on *Wonderful Educated Bear* by Heros Severum.

Todd Turkisher, **Allan Schwartzberg**, and **Ken Serio** are on Billy Eric's *Yes Indeed!*

John Paris is touring with Earth Wind & Fire.

Poogie Bell is on Samantha Siva's new CD, *Masquerade*.

Richie Morales and **Vinnie Colaiuta** are on Gato Barbieri's new CD, *The Shadow Of The Cat*. **Marc Quiñones** and **Sheila E** are on percussion.

Marc Slutsky is on Splender's new CD, *To Whom It May Concern*.

SR-71 recruited new drummer **John Allen** for their latest CD, *Tomorrow*.

Mike Curry is on Jackpot's latest disc, *Shiny Things*.

Carlos de la Garza is on the road with Reel Big Fish.

Steve Smith has had a very busy final few months of 2002, with a major US clinic tour, some live shows with tabla monster Zakir Hussain, and some Vital Information dates. For a full listing of Steve's activities, go to www.vitalinformation.com.

Gintas Janusonis is touring with Angelique Kidjo in support of her new CD, *Black Ivory Soul*. (**Amir "?uestlove" Thompson** played on the recording.) Gintas also appears on Bilal Oliver's *1st Born Second*, sharing drum duties with Thompson.

Jon Michael Brady is touring with the Southern Gospel group The Bradys.

Mauricio-Fritz Lewak is on drums and **Luis Conte** is on percussion on Jackson Browne's *The Naked Ride Home*.

Erica Stock is on Stroke 9's *Rip It Off*.

Pete Barrera is on tour with Dragpipe.

Joey Baron is on Eliane Elias's *Kissed By Nature*.

Greg Morrow is on Travis Tritt's *Strong Enough*.

Glen Sobel recently did soundtracks for *Rollerball* and *Who's Your Daddy?* He also recorded Impellitteri's recent release, *System X*, as well as Ken Tamplin's *Make Me Your Voice 2*.

Joe Travers recently filled in for **Brian Tichy** on Billy Idol's Australian tour so Brian could be with his wife for the birth of their twin girls, Isabella and Charlotte. Congratulations, Brian!

And finally, all of us here at *MD* wish to extend our condolences to **William F. Ludwig II** on the recent passing of his wife **Maggie**.

Between The Dark And Light, The Grateful Dead Photography Of Jay Blakesberg features twenty years of world-class live and studio photos by the *Modern Drummer* photographer.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Chick Webb was born on February 10, 1909.

Baby Dodds passed away on February 14, 1959.

Karen Carpenter passed away on February 4, 1983.

Tony Williams passed away on February 23, 1997.

And the Grammy goes to…. On February 25, 1986, the multi-talented **Phil Collins** won a Grammy in the Best Album category for *No Jacket Required*.

Happy Birthday!

Hal Blaine (February 5, 1929)
Mick Avory (February 15, 1944)
Harvey Mason (February 22, 1947)
Joe English (February 7, 1949)
Nigel Olsson (February 10, 1949)
Manny Elias (February 21, 1953)
Gregg Field (February 21, 1956)
Ron Welty (February 1, 1971)
Johnny Rabb (February 29, 1972)
Cyrus Bolooki (February 27, 1980)

"Try 'em, you won't believe your ears"

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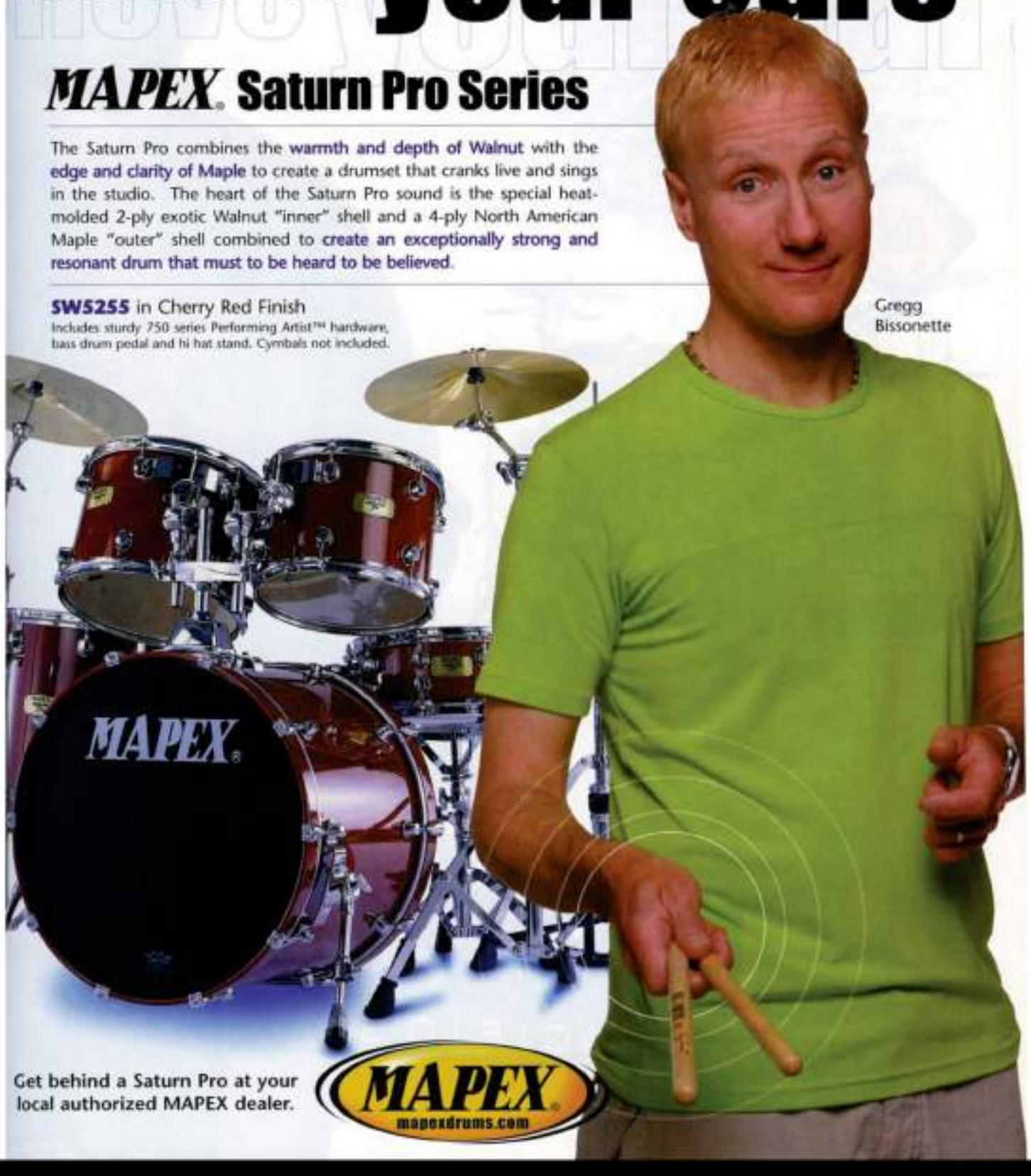

Gregg Bissonette

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Bass Drum Muffling Pillow
Premium (s-film) heads
New Modular Tom Holder
16x20" bass drum option
Available 8, 16 and 22" Add-Ons
(shown with 7x8" rack tom
and 14x16" floor tom add-ons,
additional CB800 and CS800
cymbal stands and cymbals,
sold separately)

pdp

www.pacificdrums.com

Mapex Saturn Pro Studio Drumkit

Winning At The Shell Game

HITS

hybrid maple/walnut shells produce extra color and warmth

highly adjustable hardware

beautiful appearance

MISSES

16" tom lacks low end

hardware is heavy

by Will Romano

Over the past few years, Mapex has experimented with a variety of materials in order to create a more dynamic drumshell. For its new Saturn Pro Series, Mapex has developed a hybrid maple/walnut shell intended to achieve great subtlety and sonic vibrancy that would be perfect for studio *and* stage work.

Our review kit was the six-piece Saturn Pro Studio model, which is one of several configurations available. Let's find out how it performed.

Hybrid Shells

The Studio model is sort of a conglomerate of a fusion-style and standard kit. Its so-called "comfort-size" toms include 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms and 11x14 and 13x16 suspended floor toms. The 5.1-mm shells are heat-molded and are constructed of 2-ply walnut on the inside and 4-ply maple on the outside. The heat-molding process, says Mapex, ensures that the plies are glued firmly together and resonate as one piece. The shells are fitted with low-mass lugs and 2.3-mm steel rims.

A Look Of Love

Before I even sat down to play the review model, I was taken with its beautiful Twilight Stardust painted finish. A dark, almost midnight blue dominated the upper borders of the shells and gradually faded into white near the bottoms. The gleaming chrome of the hoops meshed well with the paint. (I even noticed a gold sparkle under certain lights.) The entire package seemed charged, as if flaming electrical currents were streaming and buzzing in and around these drums.

Tom Sounds

With so much thought put into the construction and appearance of the Saturn Pro drums, I couldn't wait to hear how they sounded. With one light touch on the 10" tom, I achieved a melodious whisper. When I gave it a good whack, I was rewarded with a "slap" that decayed quickly. Nearly all of the toms had great pitch, a warm rich tone, and unexpected subtlety (when tweaked a bit). I didn't need to push too hard to make them pop, and I never once winced due to awkward clanging. These babies were smooth. Though I did not record with them, I believe that their utter grace and self-control would make them a great candidate for session work.

The only red flag was the 16" tom. I could never achieve a tone low enough to anchor the bottom end of the tom range—and I tried everything. I tuned both heads to each other, then to a slight dissonance, but nothing really seemed to work. The 14" had a throatier and deeper resonance, and I found myself often skipping from the 12" to the 16" and then back up to the 14" when playing a

fill. While that gave me an impromptu workout, I found myself being distracted because I was forced to be acutely aware of how—and where—I placed my sticks. I finally settled for a fairly loose top head and an almost totally slack bottom head, making the 16" and 14" more or less sound the same.

Bass Drum

Our 18x22 bass drum came with a stick-on hoop protector so the bass drum pedal's footboard clamp wouldn't crack the wooden hoop. Also included was a template to cut a hole in the front head (which was a Remo Ebony PowerStroke 3). But after playing the drum, I felt that that kind of surgery wasn't needed. I actually liked the sound of the notes bouncing around the drum's chamber. Yes, it was a bit chunky (almost clunky) at first. But when I tuned both heads down a bit, a great, deep thunderclap emerged. I chalked up this resonance to Mapex's isolation-type system for attaching the bass drum's legs. They're attached to a handle-like mount (similar to the tom mount) that only makes contact with the drum at two points.

Snare Drum

The 5½x14 maple/walnut snare drum fooled me. When it was tuned to a mid-range, the sound was penetrating and sharp. When cranked to a piccolo tightness, it was very expressive. That isn't to say that it lacked *cojones*. It was simply a gentle animal, which, when stroked properly, could do my bidding in a variety of situations. I tried it out in several settings, with and without muffling. This snare proved to be as prickly or as boomy as I needed it to be. A nice surprise.

Hardware

Mapex opted to equip the Saturn Pro kit with some heavy-duty metal. On one level this was sheer business genius. On another, it created a gigger's nightmare. I'll explain.

The rack toms were mounted on Mapex's durable TH682 isolation-style double tom holder, which is supported by two rods that span the depth of the bass drum shell. The spiked tom holder arms hoisted the toms via a curved mount strap. The mobility of the TH682 is exceptional. I could adjust it up or down and easily turn it 360°.

The floor toms, on the other hand, were suspended on a TS550 double-braced floor stand that nearly toppled over a couple of times as I was playing. While this stand had a number of great features (including the ability to spin 360°), they were offset by my worries that the entire contraption would come tumbling into my shin. Thankfully it never collapsed while I was playing. But that embarrassing and potentially dangerous situation was always in the back of my mind.

The two single-braced cymbal stands we tested were quite different. These pieces really impressed me. Both the boom (B750) and cymbal stand (C750) are highly adjustable, thanks to their winged lever releases, ball joints, and strong center of gravity. They both remained comfortably balanced even with their legs close together. Mapex's distinctive hard-rubber OS (Overtone Saving) cymbal washers are another nice touch. Thanks to these handy-dandy doodads, you can say bye-bye to those black fuzzy wads that pass for washers. The OS models are cleaner and stronger, and they won't be pulverized into lint.

The H750 hi-hat stand also features rubber washers, along with a "tri-nodal" cymbal seat (three plastic prongs) that supports the bottom cymbal. In this way, the seat makes as little contact as possible with the cymbal. Indeed, it seemed as though my hats were a bit more lively than usual. I can only attribute that to this feature.

The H750's legs rotate independently of the footboard, allowing the pedal to be played in a number of different positions. A ridged knob above the footboard made it easy to adjust the tension of the internal spring for a quick- or heavy-footed response. Usually I find such gadgetry to be unnecessary at best and ineffective at worst. However, after using it, I'm convinced that this aspect of the stand actually had an impact on the cymbals' overall sound and my own performance.

The P750 bass drum pedal is a mechanical wonder. Simply by cranking up the chain-drive cam with a drumkey, I set a comfortable position for the footboard and could adjust the level of force by which the beater hit the bass drum head. The beater has three playing surfaces—felt, wood, and plastic—that can be easily changed by the user. The felt and plastic didn't really tickle my fancy, but when I switched to the wood beater and stepped down on the pedal, I felt a blast to my chest.

A final note about this hardware: Good luck traveling with it. Transporting the drums themselves was not bad. But other than the single-braced cymbal stands (perhaps), the hardware seemed too heavy for a real gigger's set. And there's just too much of it. For example, the kit might be better served if the 14" or 16" tom hung off a cymbal stand via a clamp, rather than requiring an additional complete stand.

Conclusion

Kits of this size that feature so many noteworthy acoustic, aesthetic, and physical characteristics don't come cheap. Still, while the Saturn Pro's $2,849 price tag is a bit steep for most gigging musicians, it falls into the "high-mid" price category in today's market. Semi-pro and professional drummers will undoubtedly find satisfaction in the subtle nuances and versatile application potential of these instruments. And given that Mapex supplies its own sturdy hardware (for those who can handle it—or who have help), the package seems reasonable.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 suspended toms, 18x22 bass drum, and 5½x14 snare. Remo clear Ambassadors on tops and bottoms of toms, PowerStroke 3s on bass drum, and coated Ambassador on snare batter. Review kit finished in Twilight Stardust (blue-to-white fade). Other finishes include Antique Ivory, Emerald Stardust, Black Stardust, Gold Fade, Transparent Amber, Transparent Cherry Red, Transparent Black, Transparent Diamond Blue, and Wax Natural.

List price **$2,849**

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

Zildjian ZXT Series Cymbals

Clean-Cut, Bright, And Good-Looking Too!

HITS

affordably priced

rides and hi-hats offer precise stick definition

excellent selection of China models

Trashformer produces surprising effects

MISSES

crashes not as effective at lower volumes

In today's cymbal market, the visual aspect seems to be as important an issue as the individuality of sound for each cymbal line. Just as MTV influenced the music buyer with the visual dimension of music, cymbal manufacturers seem to feel that adding an eye-catching look will help attract the curious buyer to try their new line of cymbals.

If this theory is correct, then Zildjian should have no problem attracting attention to their new ZXT line of cymbals. The ZXT design has a distinctive double-layered look of circular hammering, combined with traditional lathing across the entire cymbal. All ZXT cymbals come in a brilliant finish, which further enhances their visual appeal.

But Zildjian still believes that a cymbal's *sound* should be its main selling point. Accordingly, they point to the ZXT line's improved sheet-bronze alloy and variety of hammering and lathing techniques as elements that give the new cymbals "a unique, cutting sound and definition."

The complete line of Zildjian ZXT cymbals includes rides, crashes, splashes, hi-hats, Chinas, and an ugly but loveable beast called the Trashformer. Let's dig in!

Above, from left: 10" Flash Splash, 14" Rock Hi-Hats, 14" Solid Hi-Hats, 16" Medium-Thin Crash, 18" Total China, and 20" Rock Ride. Below: 14" Trashformer.

Rides

The ZXT series offers three 20" rides—Control, Rock, and medium—and an 18" crash/ride. The Rock ride is the heaviest of the three, producing a deeper, darker ride tone than the others. The Control ride sounds similar to most Ping rides, with a bit more decay than the Rock model. My favorite is the medium ride because of its sweeter wash and full-bodied sound. It has a bit more "give" than the other two rides in terms of tone and color. All three rides have excellent stick definition and minimal overtones. The crash/ride seems to work better as a ride than a crash. Because of its thickness and minimal overtones, you really have to whack it to get a solid crash from it.

Crashes

The ZXT line offers a large selection of crashes in thin, medium-thin, and Rock weights. The thin models offer more wash and spread than their medium-thin and Rock siblings do. The medium-thins are darker in tone than the thins are, and they produce a brighter attack. The Rock crashes are very dark and heavy-sounding. I found the 18" Rock crash to work well as a crash/ride. In fact, I preferred it as a crash/ride over the actual ZXT 18" crash/ride model.

Keep in mind that you've really got to lay into these crashes to appreciate their full spectrum of sound capabilities. They produce a minimal wash of tones unless they're struck firmly. But when they are, their overall response is bright and explosive with short decay.

Flash Splashes

All three ZXT Flash splashes have a bright, solid attack. Their sharp, thick response works well for short accents. Mounting the 8" or 10" upside down on top of the 12" makes for a cool splash combo effect.

Hi-Hats

The ZXT line offers three sets of 14" hats. The Rock hats are the thickest and heaviest in sound and weight, producing dark, tight tones with a defined "chick" sound. The Solid hats are a bit lighter in tone. Their stick definition is just as pronounced as on the Rock hats, but without as much of a metallic sound.

I preferred the Max hats overall because of their crisp feel and full-bodied sound. The Max hats also feature a "wavy edged" bottom cymbal created with Zildjian's circular hammering process to give these hats a cutting "chick" sound.

Chinas

Ouch! Give me a minute for my ears to stop ringing. The Total China line is loud and explosive—guaranteed to cut through the heaviest musical armor. You'll be hard-pressed to find a more versatile line of China cymbals. In the smaller sizes the attack is direct and piercing. As you get up to the 18" and 20" sizes, the bite gives way to more of a hammering wash. If you're looking for a China in your cymbal arsenal, the ZXT line has a great selection to choose from.

Trashformer

The Trashformer (designed with the help of drumming maniac Mike Mangini) is a bent and mangled 14" cymbal with a nasty, bruised, blue-green and purple finish. Its tonal characteristics are that of a trashy crash/China effect cymbal.

On its own, the Trashformer has a rich and surprisingly powerful trashy attack that's cutting and well defined. But mount this stepchild on top of a ride, crash, or China and you get an explosive, short, nasty trash effect that's great for accenting bass drum

THE NUMBERS

Rides
18" crash/ride $172
20" medium, Control, and Rock $206

Crashes
14" thin $115
16" thin, medium-thin, and Rock $151
18" thin, medium-thin, and Rock $172

Flash Splashes
8" $78
10" $93
12" $100

Hi-Hats
14" Solid, Max, and Rock (pair) $230

Total Chinas
12" $100
14" $115
16" $151
18" $172
20" $206

Trashformer
14" $115

Box Sets
ZXT Rock Box Set $528
(14" Rock hats, 16" Rock crash, 20" Rock ride)

ZXT Pro Pack $528
(14" Solid hats, 16" medium-thin crash, 20" medium ride)

ZXT Expander Pack $309
(18" Total China, 18" medium-thin crash)

ZXT Effects Pack $238
(10" splash, 18" Total China)

Y (781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Mapex Hammered And Precious Metal Snare Drums

An Attempt At Sonic Alchemy

HITS

shells have characteristics of metal and wood

sensitive, consistent performances

lush overtones

user-friendly nylon washers

MISSES

throw-offs were a bit tight

solid bronze snare is pricey

by Will Romano

In the Middle Ages, alchemists tried to turn base metals into gold. With its new semi-machine-hammered and Precious Metal snares, Mapex has aspired to turn metal into wood. Or, at least, to provide drummers with the sharpness of metal and the warmth and depth of wood. Can any one drum possibly cover both bases without something being compromised? Let's take a look at our four review models.

Phosphorus Fury

Right out of the box, the Hammered Phosphor Bronze drum gave a clear and punchy performance. It had a resonance that thumped against my chest as I hit its Remo Coated Ambassador head dead center. According to Mapex, the snare's timbre is more focused due to its hammered design. The concept is that a hammered shell acts like uneven walls in a rehearsal studio. The result is increased standing tones and reduced ringing harmonics, without a lot of wayward sound reflections.

That being said, I did notice some ringing overtones. First I tweaked and tightened the heads while finessing the two snare tension knobs (one on each side). I also used a dampening ring. Mapex's nylon tension rod washers (featured on all our review models) made cranking up to high tension sinfully easy. Once tightened, the drum's "metalness" was neither too frail nor too harsh. I attribute this to the 45° bearing edges and excess metal flap on the top edge, consciously left on by Mapex to give the drum more body. In addition, because this drum contains both light phosphorous and hard metal, its highs and lows were equally tempered.

I was not impressed with Mapex's slow-action throw-off (which was a feature on all of our review models). That aside, when I released the snares on the Hammered Phosphor Bronze drum and struck it, a characteristic "plunk" and sharp melodic ring was heard. The mere fact that I could spot distinct tones is a credit to Mapex's craftsmanship. It was like a wood shell on steroids. This drum's tuning range is so wide that it could easily play hip-

Hammered Phosphor Bronze

Hammered Stainless Steel

Hammered Brass Black Panther

Solid Bronze Precious Metal

hop to metal, and anything in between.

It should be noted that this shell, like the other Mapex hammered shells, is not 100% hand-hammered. In fact, the bulk of the work is done by machine, which the company makes no attempt to hide. In fact, the drum badges read only "Hammered by Mapex." It's a minor point, which, in all honesty, I don't think accounts for much difference in the sound.

"Puff" Daddy

Because of its brawny, dimpled appearance, I thought the Hammered Stainless Steel drum would be one-dimensional. Was I wrong! The drum was sensitive—no doubt thanks to the 45° bearing edges and large snare bed. But it also gave me a dry pop, as opposed to the loud crack I was expecting. I liked that tone so much, I played into what I thought was the drum's strength and kept the head a little bit slack. The slightly "doughy" feel of the coated Ambassador head made playing the drum surprisingly delightful.

On the other hand, when the drum was properly tuned, it could also be sharp. I was convinced that its large snare bed, which allowed the wires to rest more flatly on the bottom head, had something to do with this. Rimshots were strong but musically distinct.

The dual snare-tension knobs were useful in getting those in-between-tension snare rattles, as well as a tight, campy, vaudeville-style trashiness. With the snares released, the drum gave out a tribal "dooink" that could fit well in the confines of world music. When I tuned the drum down (including the bottom head), I achieved a nice throaty depth without a lot of mushy, weak tones. This is a very deceiving drum that I felt would be a great fit for soft rock studio work and live rock settings.

Blackened Bacon

In the past, Mapex's Black Panther line aimed at optimizing clarity and resonance without sacrificing sensitivity. I put the Hammered Black Panther through the ringer to prove that this was still true. For my first test, I shoved myself into a walk-in closet to hear how the drum would react in a closed-in atmosphere. To my surprise, it projected with strength, clarity, and a deep bottom end.

Out of the closet (so to speak), the drum gave me a crack, a rattle, and a thud—the kind of crisp-yet-fat sound that you'd expect from a 1.2-mm chromed brass shell with excess metal mass around the bearing edge. And when I hit the coated Ambassador head in the right spot, lush overtones flew into the air. Sidestick beats sent out melodious rings, helped by the 3-mm, 24k gold-plated die-cast hoop.

I then tuned both heads out of sync with one another and discovered that I could obtain low, resounding pitches. When I balanced the head tension, the drum became quite perky but not overly chatty. No big boom here, just a well-behaved, smooth piece of equipment.

Going For The Bronze

Coming from Mapex's Precious Metal line, the Solid Bronze model (the only non-hammered snare we reviewed) had a lot going for it. For starters, it just *looked* slick. Its smooth bronze shell and dual die-cast hoops gave it a striking yet subtle golden hue. In addition, a thin cord hoisted the snare wires. I'm so used to plastic strips that this was faintly obscene, like seeing someone in a string bikini. That's the good news.

Now for the bad news: This drum is *heeeaaavy*. I pity the fool who has to walk several blocks with this hunk of metal under his or her arm. What effect did the bulk have on the sound? It was hard to tell at first because the drum needed a little tuning. When I tightened both heads, a rush of ticking noises emerged—the drum was extremely crisp and sensitive. As I tuned down, it projected a monstrous skin resonance. So maybe the heavy shell is acoustically justified after all.

This leaves me with the feeling that the Solid Bronze drum is an all-around good package, with one drawback: The price. You could buy two snares of similar (if not equal) response for the same amount of money.

Final Formula

Mapex's hammered drums are good buys for drummers who work in different genres. For the most part they're consistently solid instruments that are available in various sizes and metal shell types for equally varied acoustic performance. While the Precious Metal snare we tried also had several appealing qualities, those qualities come at a premium price. So you'd want to evaluate them carefully before buying.

THE NUMBERS

5½x14 Precious Metal Solid Bronze (SB4553)	$1,250
5½x14 Hammered Black Panther (BR455H)	$ 700
5½x14 Hammered Phosphor Bronze (PB455H)	$ 615
5½x14 Hammered Stainless Steel (ST4553H)	$ 505

Y (615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

Regal Tip X-Series Drumsticks

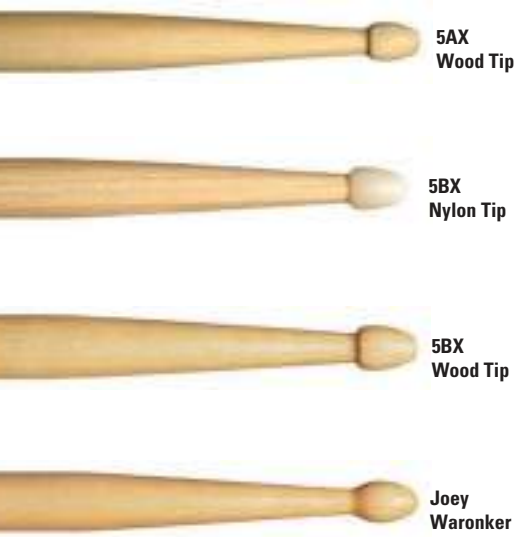
And Now For Something Extra...

HITS

extra reach with good balance

outstanding construction and finish

by Martin Patmos



Looking for a little extra something in your stick? Regal Tip recently introduced the X-Series line of drumsticks, which are beefed-up versions of their most popular models, created for players looking for more strength and reach. The common design elements that make up the X-Series are a thicker neck, modified tip, and a little added length. The sticks included in the X-Series are the 5AX, 5BX, RockX, and Joey Waronker models. As with Regal Tip sticks in general, all the sticks were straight and well balanced.

5AX And 5BX

I began with one of my favorite stick sizes, the 5BX. Featuring a 9/16"-long acorn-shaped tip, a 16¼" length, and a .590" diameter, the stick is versatile and comfortable to play with. The 5AX, also measuring 16¼" long, had a .560" diameter and a ½"-long acorn shaped tip, and was equally comfortable and versatile. The added ¼" in length was useful in both cases, yet not so drastic as to negatively affect the balance (and thus my playing comfort).

The 5AX and 5BX models are available with wood or nylon tips. The wood-tipped versions had the warmth and slightly darker sound I expected, while the nylon tips were defined and bright.

RockX

The RockX model (not shown), at 16¼" long with a .555" diameter, had an interesting feel to it that's a bit different from many other sticks. With a short, fat, ½"-long rounded barrel tip and a short, thick neck, the stick felt a bit heavy towards the front. However, after playing with it for a day or two I found it quite comfortable, and it certainly lived up to its name. The design allowed for easy rimshots, and really played into the drums—resulting in a very solid sound. This stick was made for backbeats.

Joey Waronker

The Joey Waronker model was particularly nice to play with. It measures 16½" long by .550" in diameter, and features a 5/8"-long oval-shaped tip. The length of the stick was more noticeable here, providing a nice reach while maintaining a balanced feel. Overall this was a very comfortable and versatile medium-weight stick that would work well in most playing situations.

For drummers looking for a little extra reach or more meat on their sticks, the Regal Tip X-Series sticks is a good place to start. The sticks are well made, they feel great, and they provide their extra length with no sacrifice of taper and balance.

THE NUMBERS

All X-Series wood-tip models, per pair $11.50
5AX and 5BX nylon-tip models, per pair $12.00

(716) 285-3546, www.regaltip.com.

LP Shakers And Merengue Guira

One Shot Shaker

The One Shot by Danny Reyes is a pretty neat new shaker. Simply put, it just shakes forward. So if you are shaking a 16th-note pattern, you'll only hear the 8th notes created by the forward motion.

Why would you want that? Well, the One Shot produces a very clean and crisp sound, because there are no swishy beads rolling around. If you've ever tried to play a shaker when the music calls for a ritard, you'll appreciate how the One Shot handles the situation superbly.

The mechanism inside the square-tubed One Shot that stops the beads from hitting the back of the shaker works great. And after getting used to the sound and feel, you'll find lots of uses for this easily controllable instrument. I particularly liked recording with it and putting a delay on the sound for a very cool effect. Put one in each hand, or put two back-to-back in one hand, and you'll play the cleanest 16th notes you've ever heard. The possibilities for creating clean, intricate rhythms are endless. Better yet, the One Shot comes in two sizes for additional acoustic variety. The small version goes for $29, the larger model is priced at $39.

Cyclops Shaker

On the other end of the spectrum, the Cyclops Shaker, designed by Bashiri Johnson, is very loose and loud—everything you want in a live situation. Its cool oval design allows it to be held and played like a tambourine. Its hard plastic construction is really effective when you strike the side (as you would a tambourine). But there's also a center grip that allows for the traditional method of playing.

Like the One Shot, the Cyclops Shaker comes in two sizes. The larger of the two ($36) produces a low, gritty sound that's perfect for creating a "loop-like" vibe with a drummer. The smaller size ($24) would work well in studio and live settings.

Rawhide Maracas

Three sets of traditional rawhide maracas round out this shaker extravaganza. The sets are Natural, Maroon, and a festive and patriotic American Flag pair (for your Fourth of July gig). They all have a great, smooth sound that's still very sharp and pronounced. They're also very well manufactured; they feel as if they could stand up on the road for a while. To help them stay in good shape, they come with a handy carrying bag. Because they're hand-made of a natural material, they're a little pricey at $69 per pair. But their natural sound, feel, and appearance give them good value for their price.

Merengue Guira

The Merengue Guira is a perfectly designed instrument for a merengue band. It's *really* loud, yet not very heavy, making it great for those long gigs. The design is well balanced, making the guira easy to manipulate with the hand that holds it. The handle is very smooth, and it's big enough to get a solid grip on. The textured metal playing surface gives a bright, raspy sound that projects well.

The wood-en-handled merengue scraper is also well designed. Its handle, too, is very smooth, and the tines are tightly placed together for a crisp sound. This is another instrument that's solidly made to stand up on the road. It's priced at $99. **(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com.**

Bosphorus Hammer China Cymbal

It's always good to be well armed when heading into battle. But this mother of all Chinas is much more than just a weapon for revenge against overly loud guitarists. The very sight of it is impressive: a 22" dish of gleaming spun bronze, with hammer marks around the flange and unfinished spots on the body that give it a look from antiquity.

The Hammer China is part of jazz great Jeff Hamilton's signature series for Bosphorus. Accordingly, it's a very versatile cymbal. While it claims to be a crash—and, indeed, has numerous voices in that capacity—it also presents several surfaces for playing as a ride. The main striking area is about 16" deep, with an 8" flange. The cymbal really lends itself to being played as a crash-ride. That is, you can ride it, then kick off to the side for a quick accent, and then come right back to the ride pattern.

One question with any China is whether to play it right side up or upside-down. I preferred playing this one upside down, because that exposed the edge of the flange, which is a great playing surface. Striking the flange produced a sharp, tooth-rattling attack. True, the cymbal bell isn't available to strike in this position, but playing on the small flange at the inside edge of the bell can produce a similar sound.

Three lightweight rivets are set in a semicircle on one side of the cymbal. So you can achieve different levels of rivet sound and sustain simply depending on where you hit the cymbal.

The Hammer China can be bold and loud, so it would cut through any imaginable horn section (in a big band) and most amplifiers (in a rock setting). But with the right touch (and some attention to overtone build-up), it can also be crashed or ridden at lower volume levels to blend into the overall rhythmic

current. It delivers a big-time China wash sound that's still controllable for riding and that complements other instruments. At the same time, it offers numerous mini-gong crash tones for punctuation at any dynamic level. It lists for $580. Y **(770) 205-0552,** **www.bosphoruscymbals.com.**

Robin Tolleson

Meinl Ibo Drums And Drumset Timbales

Ibo Drums

Meinl's Ibo Drums (you may also know them as Udu pots) come in two different body shapes and three finish designs. And while traditional, authentic African Udus are made of clay and thus are very fragile, Meinl's Ibos are made from a durable fiberglass, and are therefore virtually unbreakable.

The jug-shaped drums have a foam-padded base to place them on, along with a microphone hole in their sides. This is a good thing, because these are not loud drums at all. Plan on close-miking them in a band or live setting. I set up a couple of mic's in the studio and recorded the Ibos, and they sounded great. The low-end tone is really fat, and with a large-diaphragm mic' just outside the hole, the slaps on the sides are really clean. The Ibos are priced at $149 and $159, depending on body style and finish.

Drummer Timbale

Years ago I augmented my drumset with a second snare drum with its bottom head off and its top head cranked up, trying as best it could to sound like a timbale. Well, Meinl has eliminated the need for such approximations with its 4x13 Drummer Timbale. It's made from chrome-plated steel and has a classic timbale sound that's not too thin. It would be great for a reggae drummer, or for any drummer looking to add another color to his or her musical palette.

The Drummer Timbale is fitted with a mounting clamp designed to attach to any tom holder or L-rod, so it's easy to add anywhere to your kit. (And you don't need to worry about a snare stand!) I tried mounting the drum in a few different places on my kit, and I found that it's small and light enough to fit just about anywhere. It lists for $139.

Mini Timbales

Meinl's Mini Timbales are a great complement to the Drummer Timbale. They're made of the same material and have the same style, but they're 8" and 10" in diameter and 4" deep, so they really crack. But don't let their small size fool you. When I recorded them on a couple of tracks, they didn't sound all that "mini" on tape. In fact, they were very punchy and quite ringy.

The Mini Timbales have the

same mounting bracket as on the Drummer Timbale, and have the same ability to fit just about anywhere. In fact, I set up all three drums, and they sounded great together. The Mini Timbales list for $229. Y **(877) 886-3465,** **www.meinl.de.**

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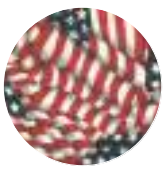

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Spüg of Mudvayne

"Call me crazy, but I live this, this satiates me. To feel like I have an opportunity to create art of my own—that's the most vital thing in my life. Being entertained…I don't know what that really means anymore."

Matt McDonough doesn't mind talking drums. It's just that, to him, it's only one element of his very wide-ranging artistic expression. The name he dons for a particular project, the art books he lugs around with him, the electronic music he listens to, the conversations he relishes with friends and colleagues, the studies he prefers to keep private—all these things taken together define this intriguing musician. Even the act of *talking* about his art, he sees as fuel for creation: "I take interviewing very seriously," Spüg, as he is known these days, explains. "It's as important to me as playing drums. I consider it another medium in which to express myself creatively."

The platform most people associate Spüg with, of course, is Mudvayne. *L.D. 50*, the band's major-label debut, featured the track "Dig," surely one of the heaviest, most complex slabs of sound ever to attain massive video exposure. Sure, the band's freakish makeup caught your attention. But once you were in, it was impossible to ignore the technique, passion, and invention of this bright new band. Spag in particular (that was his stage name then) was an attention magnet, with his unusual double bass accents, polyrhythmic layering, and killer hand/foot combos.

Mudvayne's new album, *The End Of All Things To Come*, might be cheekily named. But as an artful and inspiring approach to heavy music, it may very well be the last word for a good long while.

Story by Adam Budofsky

Alex Solca

MD: During your shoot for the "Dig" DVD, after a few takes, you're exhausted and say to the cameraman, "That's it, you got it all from me." Do you go all out every time you play?

Spüg: Oh, yeah. I don't mess around. In the studio you're not going to have to do twenty, thirty takes with me, because I'm playing at 100% of my ability every time. I ended up having to play the song like twenty-five times for the video. And by the end I'm like, "Dude, this is not productive." I don't ever play more than an hour and a half at one time.

Alex Solca

I'm actually in a lot of pain right now. My elbows are bruised, my joints, my wrists, my thumbs, I have calluses coming up…. You play drums, you know the drill. I tracked for the first two weeks we were in the studio, and then I didn't play for two months because we were working in the studio, and I couldn't rehearse or anything. I just bought a V-Drum kit, so hopefully now on breaks I'll be able to play. But after two months off, we only had two weeks to get back into it, hitting it as hard as we could.

MD: People who work out a lot or who run long distances say they can literally feel a change in their bodies.

Spüg: There's the endorphins and the adrenaline. And there's definitely something that happens to your brain chemistry when you exert yourself at that kind of level. I also believe that I've altered my brain chemistry by playing and listening to unusual music—or even just thinking about music.

For me drumming is like a martial art—not literally, but in a metaphoric sense. I feel that sense of pushing energy through my kit and out of myself. I play through my drums, which is also a sound issue. There's a certain tonality that some drummers get, especially jazz drummers. I'm not comparing myself to them, but in a certain sense I think I make my kit sound different from the way it would if anyone else played it. That's from the unique character of the way I play and the amount of energy that I push through my kit.

MD: What do you feel like when you get off stage?

Spüg: Normally there's a tremendous sense of relief. All this energy has gone out of me. I'm usually pretty zoned out in my space. It takes me a while to transition back into a normal head space after playing. I'm not sleepy, though. Usually it's very exuberant.

MD: Have you always had such a physical approach to the drums?

Spüg: Yeah, I've pretty much always played like that. Right now I'm actually trying to tone down my show so I can become more accurate. But it's very much in my character to play tapped out. I think I've been like that since I was a kid. I don't look at it in an aggressive or violent sense, though. I think it's more…blissful. And I feel really positive about the energy that I

put out in my playing. It's joyful, celebratory.

MD: Some people perceive your main vibe as anger.

Spüg: Unfortunately there is an assumption that it's a negative experience. I think a big problem is that our band is too popular. You've got a creative endeavor that's also an entertainment thing and a monetary thing, and it's trying to address too many markets. We've got the fourteen-year-old kids, who are probably 80% of our buying market, who love the makeup. But then we've got a serious adult audience, people our age who have a history in music or art. It's super hard to communicate to those extremes. And then there's the media that judges us without putting all the pieces together, which creates more confusion.

MD: Ideally how would you like Mudvayne perceived?

Spüg: As a vehicle for people to have a deeper, richer, self-reflective experience of themselves. I don't want to say that there is no specific content to our band, but we are much more focused on process, and on giving an example to listeners to be able to connect the dots. We don't dictate to people. It's important for us to leave things ambiguous.

On the other hand, I think there are certain aspects of our band that are pretty unique, unorthodox, and probably unprecedented, especially in the heavy music genre. That might be taken as an arrogant statement, but I know that a lot of the things that I'm trying to do artistically are things that *I've* wanted to experience from art. So it's kind of answering a need of my own. In that sense it's a process of self-discovery for me too. Writing this record was a wonderful experience of self-reflection, looking back and going, "Wow, I didn't *mean* to say that," but it's coming through in my music. It can be a little bit disturbing, but really exciting.

MD: In your last *MD* interview [June 2001] you mentioned how during the recording of the first album, sometimes the engineers weren't quite sure what you were thinking when you were laying down your drum tracks.

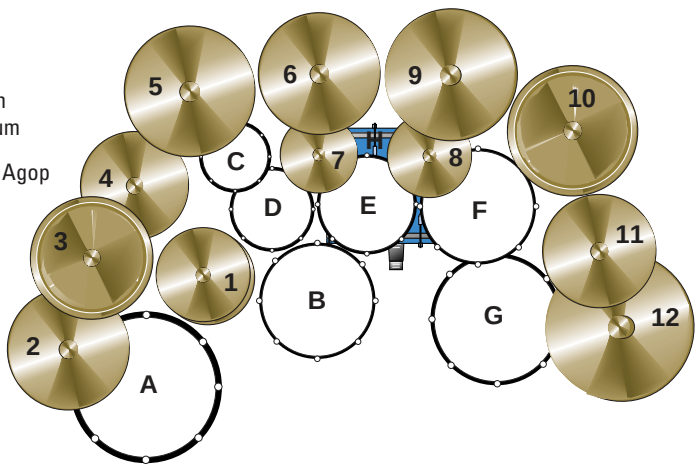
Spüg: Oh yeah. In certain cases Greg [Tribbett, guitar] and I will play polyrhythms against each other, or I might start a fill at an odd point in the measure, or flip a beat so it pops into 5/4. If you don't

Seth Hockman

Tapping The 'Vayne

Drums: Pearl MMX Masters Series
- **A.** 16x18 floor tom
- **B.** 6½x14 Paiste Ocheltree metal snare
- **C.** 8x8 tom
- **D.** 8x10 tom
- **E.** 9x12 tom
- **F.** 12x14 tom
- **G.** 16x16 floor tom
- **H.** 16x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Istanbul Agop
- **1.** 13" hi-hats
- **2.** 16" crash
- **3.** 16" China
- **4.** 14" crash
- **5.** 17" crash
- **6.** 16" crash
- **7.** 8" splash
- **8.** 10" splash
- **9.** 18" crash
- **10.** 18" China
- **11.** 15" crash
- **12.** 20" ride



Electronics: Roland V-Drums

Hardware: Pearl, including a P2002C double pedal (with red cams)

Heads: Remo C.S. on snare batter, Ambassadors on toms, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter

Sticks: Ahead 7A (nylon tip)

know the context of the music, it's not going to make any sense. The engineers, who'd worked with big, big bands, didn't know us. We could have been another band that sells 20,000 copies and then gets dropped. There's a big sense of having to prove yourself. But this goes for everything we do. Our label has basically had an attitude that they don't understand anything we're doing. Now we're starting to sell some records, so it's becoming obvious that we must know *something*.

MD: How was it recording the new album?

Spüg: There was a lot more cooperation.

MD: Was it the same group of people working on it?

Spüg: No, we had a completely different crew [headed by producer David Bottrill]. We've taken the attitude that when we work with a producer, it's like, You bring in your people if you want to. I don't want to seem negative about the people we worked with on the first album, though. I appreciate that sort of challenge, and it helped me focus and clarify my vision.

MD: How has your drumming changed since you recorded the first album?

Spüg: My whole head space and my approach to the writing on this record was completely different from the last record. I took more risks. Going into the writing for this album, I made a conscious decision to focus on several things, the first of which was being a member of the band, not just the drummer. Rather than being distracting, I wanted to contribute to a cohesive experience with the music. It was really important for me to leave as much space as possible. Some people might find that funny, because our music is pretty busy. But on several songs I'm playing a lot more open than I've ever played in my life.

Alex Solca

Unfortunately, because everything was written so fast, I didn't get enough time to respond to the lyrics and vocals, which is something I like to do. But a main concern was leaving as much space for vocals as possible. Chad [Gray] and I are super hooked up, so I know that in places where I would normally do a fill, or maybe change something up, he'll anticipate that, or in those places where I don't fill it up, I knew that he would do something because he would be feeling that same emptiness that I would. I really wanted this to be a vocal album, which I think for the average listener will be the most exciting experience on the record. And I think that shines through—the vocal production, the variety of tonalities. It rules.

MD: It's unusual for a drummer to be so concerned with the vocals.

Spüg: I think that attitude began even before we were signed. When we demo'd "Death Blooms," it was the first time I had ever *heard* the vocals. We normally played in a basement, and Chad would be singing over some P.A., and I couldn't really hear what he was doing. But while we were mixing that demo, it was like a light bulb went on in my head—bing!—the chorus is very melodic. It was so appropriate, and it showed me a way that we can contribute a sort of positive energy to our music. There's something about melody and singing that is inherently uplifting, and we all felt such an attachment to that concept.

MD: Did you demo the songs for this album too?

Spüg: We did some *serious* demo'ing for this record so that there were very few mistakes or surprises when we went into recording. All the songs were written, vocals and everything, before we went in the studio.

Another thing is that it's best to experience our albums as a whole, not disassemble them and listen to the songs individually. In fact, the album was sequenced before it was written. I think our music makes more sense that way. I codified the ideas behind the sequencing in all the artwork, and I'm going to start dropping hints in interviews, which is part of the fun. It's hard for me to be objective, but I think as a listener you experience that while listening to the whole thing, even if you don't know it on a conscious level.

MD: You seem to enjoy having things

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planned out.

Spüg: Oh yeah, by the time I hit the stage I know exactly what I'm doing. I'm not improvisational on any level. Though I do give myself room for improvisation and accidents in the compositional stage. Going back to the idea of processing content, the process is accepting change and accidents, and working from that.

MD: That reminds me of some of Brian Eno's theories about chance.

Spüg: Absolutely. I read that when he worked on David Bowie's *Outside* album—which I love, it's awesome—beforehand he wrote up a kind of screenplay about another planet with various cultures. He described what the nightlife would be like, what the music scene would be like. Then he created maybe fifteen characters, and when the musicians showed up they got this outline and received a character. The engineer, Bowie, Eno—everyone involved had a character. And nobody knew who anyone else's character was. Now, *Outside* was almost completely improvisational, and the musicians were supposed to interact with one another and reveal their characters by what they did musically. The whole album was written and recorded like that. That's the most mind-blowingly beautiful thing ever. I remember reading that and thinking, "*That's* the deal."

But this type of stuff goes throughout the history of art. If you are familiar with the composer John Cage, that was one of his big things. He was famous for creating opportunities for accident and change in his compositional approach. Now music is perceived almost solely as an entertainment vehicle, and a lot of the art factor has been taken out. But if you change your perspective you'll see painters like Ellsworth Kelly, Jean Arp…all these famous people who would take a picture, cut it up in pieces, throw it on the ground, and put it back together.

MD: Eno's "characters" certainly seem to have a connection with what you guys are doing, with your stage names, etc.

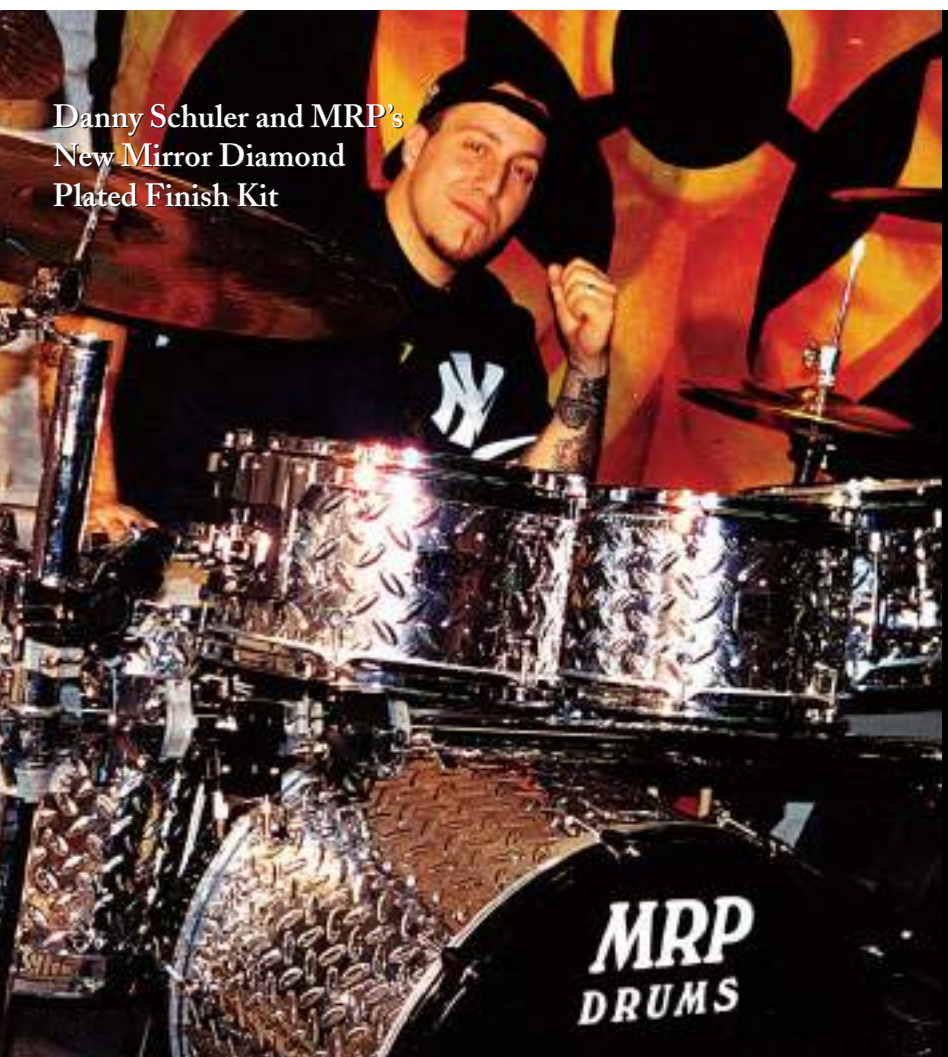
Spüg: There's a lot of misunderstanding about this, and I can't blame anybody, because it's hard to set something straight while wearing makeup and having these made-up names. A lot of people think that I become Spüg when I write. It's not like that. The composition and the interaction of us as four people is very much a personal thing, very much outside of the images.

MD: Watching your DVDs, I was struck by how much you guys goof around with each other, and how different that is from your perceived personas.

Spüg: This brings up a good point. I'd like to make a serious effort during this album cycle to…I don't want to say "demystify" the band, because I think that mythology aspect is a lot of fun. I know that's what I liked about bands when I was a kid, and I don't want to take that away.

But it's becoming apparent that people take us way too seriously, especially in foreign countries. It's almost like we are supposed to be some kind of robots or walking encyclopedias or something. And I don't think that's contributing to the band in a positive way. So I think it's important to at least put something out there to balance things, the less serious side of who we are. And humor is such an important part of our band. It's as important as anything else.

All we do is screw around. Before we got signed, we put together our first tour. We drove to Denver and back in twelve



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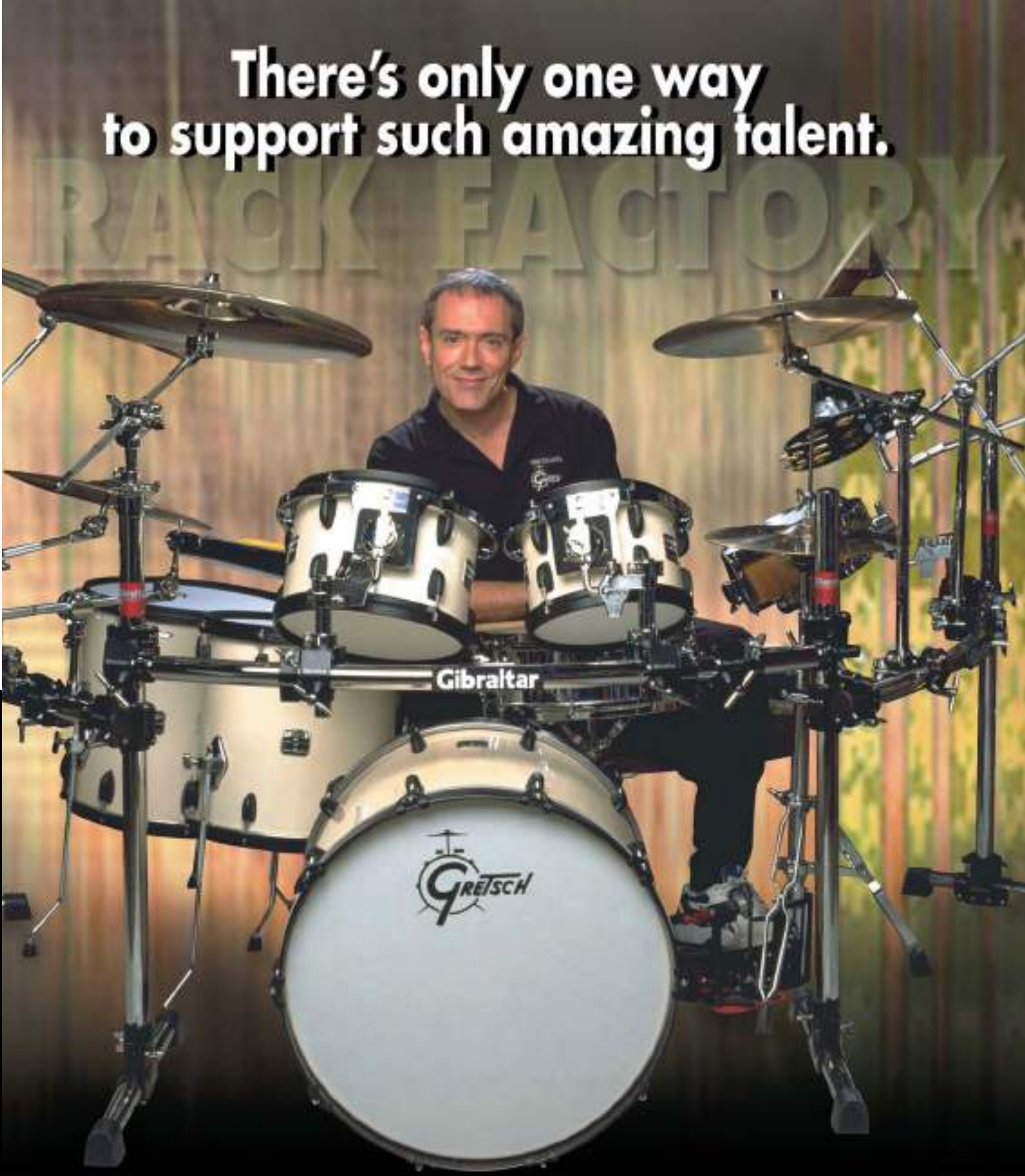

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days, and the night that we left, Chad came out of a gas station bathroom, and he'd bought an air freshener designed like some '70s Playboy model. We hung it up on the rearview mirror, and it just *happened*. She was Rochelle, and she had been kidnapped out of the pharmaceutical aisle in a Wal-Mart by Mormon gypsies. And we were on the road to go find her. Chad is a drug dealer and I'm his right-hand man, the killer, who never talks. All he ever says is "Yeah." This goes on and on. Chad and I probably have thirty different characters we do.

So the DVD concert video was one of the first opportunities for people to see that we don't take ourselves that seriously. And that needs to come across, because I talk about some pretty wacko shit, and we're trying to communicate some pretty out stuff in our music. And for anyone to think that I'm constantly in some state of transformation or time travel…c'mon. I'm definitely suggesting something and wanting to achieve something, but you can't take yourself *that* seriously.

MD: In terms of your drumming…

Spüg: Not to interrupt your question, but this is actually something that's been on my mind for a long time: I always felt that if I ever had a chance to do an extensive interview…I wouldn't want to offend anyone…but I have always felt that I'm not really the guy. [laughs] But this stuff I'm talking about is what I'm about.

MD: Your drumming speaks for itself, though, so drummers, especially your young fans, should hear what you have to say.

Spüg: Well, as an adolescent just beginning to play drums, I bought *Modern Drummer* every month.

MD: So, then, what about that sixteen-year-old kid today who is in a band, listening to Mudvayne? There is a point around that age where your mind hopefully starts expanding. What sorts of things turned your head around? I see two art books right here on the table.

Spüg: I've got a whole bag of books that I carry with me on the road. Movies, art in general, conversing with different people—those are the things that I'm most focused on. Again, it's about process. I can focus on this and draw from it, and literally have it affect my drumming and what I contribute to the band. If you know how to recognize it, then it contributes to your world view and your ability to create art.

The one thing I always say—and this is in keeping with my saying "I could never really see me doing an interview for a drum magazine"—I don't identify with being a drummer. A lot of people get freaked out when I say I'm not a drummer. But I'm *not* a drummer. And I mean that literally. I do not identify with drumming; it's a medium that I express myself through. And, at least for me, I think there's a positive angle to not identifying with it. It doesn't close me off, and I can experience drumming in a different sense than somebody who lives and breathes drums. But that's not my head space.

MD: So you're more like a visitor.

Spüg: I'm exploring one of many potential mediums in which I can express myself. Drums happen to be a very effective medium for me. I don't think my disassociation with drumming is a fault of drumming. I think it's more of a problem with the entertainment industry, not seeing itself as an artistic vehicle. I want to change that. Maybe it's not my place to judge, but I think to revitalize or keep something going

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with heavy music, it has to happen. Maybe nobody else cares. I think I'm pretty off in my own little head space about this.

MD: There are probably other drummers who share your feelings.

Spüg: I just haven't had an opportunity to share that with many musicians. I would probably feel a lot more camaraderie with painters.

MD: What was your initial introduction to the world of visual art?

Spüg: I can remember when I was in grade school, my uncle got me enrolled in an art class that was run by a museum. But that was the only time I did anything. I'm really not a very visual person. My experience of painting has nothing to do with any visual quality, or entertainment quality. It's all conceptual, and that's what I find exciting. It's about the intellectual, the cerebral, and being able to communicate something not verbal.

I also went through a big David Lynch phase. I've been a fan since *Blue Velvet*, but a few years ago I really got into him, and outside of watching his films, I started reading as much about him as I could. And he mentioned that two of his major influences were Jackson Pollock and Francis Bacon, two famous painters. I had no idea who either one was. So I bought a few books on Pollock and Francis Bacon, and of course it didn't make any sense to me what Lynch was talking about. I'm like, "What?!" Like, "Where do *Wild At Heart* and Jackson Pollock cross?" But it piqued my interest. Since then I've been off on that trip, and I've found something I really identify with.

MD: Like you were saying earlier, the music world today doesn't really promote intellectualism. But the art world does.

Spüg: Yeah, and the history of painting is a lot older than the music industry, and there's been a greater openness to abstraction. And also there was a marketable viability in abstraction that happened pretty much in the late '60s and early '70s. Unfortunately that never happened in contemporary music.

I don't want to put across that I dislike being on a major label, though. I enjoy the commercial aspects of what we do as much as the abstraction of the band's creative process. Like I said, I enjoy interviewing. I love working in a context of marketability but being able to use that to my advantage, moving that energy around. I don't want to come off as being overly cynical.

MD: Well, there's no reason not to turn as many people on to it as you can, right?

Spüg: Exactly. It's very satisfying when you are posed with what seems like a very contradictory situation and you can make that work for you. This goes back to what we touched on regarding the fact that we've got a market of fourteen-year-old boys, and we've got a very serious adult content. I want to speak to the adults. I want to talk to painters. I want painters to listen to my music and have a sense of identity with it. Has it happened yet? No one has really come to me. [laughs] But I would really appreciate an adult, mature audience that could appreciate those aspects of our band, because that's who I am, and I enjoy that aspect. I also enjoy the adolescent aggression and not being so serious.

MD: You can imagine that in a few years some of your fans who are fourteen and fifteen are going to…

Spüg: …grow with us.

MD: Yeah. Like Tool touring with King Crimson, passing that along.

Spüg: Yeah, how incredible was that? Actually, print this, maybe this will open up

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MD: By the way, what was that music that you were playing on your CD player when I arrived?

Spüg: That was Squarepusher. Check this out. This just came out. The name of the album is *Do You Know Squarepusher?* Squarepusher is really this one guy, Tom Jenkinson, who's a jazz bass player. I'm not saying he physically plays everything on his records, but you can tell he knows music. He's not just messing around, pressing keys on a computer.

MD: You also mentioned the group Autechre earlier.

Spüg: Oh, dude, Autechre is my favorite band. Pretty much all I listen to is electronic music. I hardly listen to any music that has drums in it.

MD: We were talking earlier about the new album. I'd like to get a little bit more into how it was recorded. Did you do it the same way as last time, laying down the drum tracks unaccompanied?

Spüg: No, I played pretty much with Greg's guitar. I did do one song by myself, but I'd rather play with the guitar. I use it as a guide.

MD: One of the things that comes out more on the new album is your control of dynamics.

Spüg: That's a big part of our music. That's why I'm super happy with the production and the mastering that Bob Ludwig did. He made sure the compression wouldn't blow all the dynamics out of skew like is typical in metal productions. That transparency of dimension and depth was maintained.

As far as tips for playing with dynamics, first you've got to tune in. If you are in touch with the emotional content that you are trying to put through in a song, the body will follow suit. Technique-wise, you have to practice. Get used to the way it feels to drop in dynamic—and then to explode. It takes muscle memory, and the only way to get that is by experimenting with it. Listen to bands that incorporate it—Tool, for one.

MD: Your hand/foot combinations are all over this disc too. You certainly employ tom fills, but I hear your drumming in almost more of a vertical manner—very part-oriented.

Spüg: I really identify with the sense of being a dancer. The whole body is a gestalt—it's one thing—and your interaction with your instrument involves the body. Instead of disassembling into parts, with this arm doing this thing and this foot doing this thing, I've always approached my writing and my playing from the perspective of it being one thing, and everything hinges together.

Early on, one of my favorite bands was Voivod. The drummer, Away, did so much double kick work, but a lot of it worked with his fills. The kick supported and became an integral instrument.

MD: Besides just playing along to your Voivod records…

Spüg: Actually I never did that. When I started playing kit, the only music I played to was on the radio. I remember playing to Madonna's "Lucky Star" and Simple Minds' "Don't You Forget About Me," and jamming to *Number Of The Beast* by Iron Maiden. But early on I discovered I'd never be a cover drummer. I've done a little of

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that, but I immediately started looking for my own voice. By the time Voivod came along, I was in bands.

It never interested me to try to sound like other drummers or to play other people's music. I wanted to be in a band before I even started playing an instrument. I had the name of my first band years before the band ever came together. I remember in early high school writing its name on a notebook. We eventually moved to a different city, and years later I joined a band and said, "This is going to be the name." So this is natural. Like I said, my impetus and my driving force is something non-verbal. It's never been about drumming.

MD: Could you see yourself ten, twenty years from now being equally creative in a different medium?

Spüg: Oh absolutely. It's highly unlikely that I'll be touring in ten years. There's so much that I want to do otherwise.

MD: Any specific ideas?

Spüg: Well, I'm starting to paint.

MD: So you *are* a visual person.

Spüg: Well, in addition to the conceptual side of art, I'm trying to learn the facility of it, how to express myself in that manner.

MD: What style would you like to work in?

Spüg: My big thing is minimalism. I really love the Russian constructivists between like 1910 and 1925. I'm a big fan of Lissitzky, Tatlin, Malevich. The painting that I'm trying to do is monochromatic multi-panel stuff, separate pieces that come together as a conjunctive whole. I'm very interested in non-relational painting.

MD: What do you mean by that?

Spüg: No part draws attention from any other part. You have to balance the elements. This part needs to go over here and this part needs to go here and here and here, so that they are balancing each other. I find that sort of art extremely exciting.

MD: What do you think it touches in your head?

Spüg: It is logical *and* irrational, and I think that's really powerful. Just because things are logical doesn't mean they have to make sense. I think that's a very positive world view.

To me, the biggest problem in the world is thinking. Our biggest downfall is attaching ourselves to thought, believing that we can solve or answer certain questions that are non-verbal. Thinking divides us from experience. It seems to me that if one can divorce oneself from the process of thinking, there's a greater harmony, there's a greater understanding of truth.

MD: Is it like when people confront abstract art or free jazz, and they try to attach literal meaning to it?

Spüg: Yeah, exactly. People are missing the point of the non-verbal yet extremely intellectual and philosophical content that is behind how art like this is made, and why it's made—what the motivation is. It's not about being entertained. It's not about looking good. It's about expressing an ideal, it's affirming an artistic aspiration, period. My art is definitely not going to have anything to do with looking nice, or satisfying anybody visually. If it does, that's secondary to the conceptual.

Case in point: As a compositional tool there have been times where, to serve the music, I've gone, "This part needs to be in 5/4, so do this pattern or polyrhythm." I don't even know what it's going to sound like, and it doesn't *matter* what it sounds like. That maybe sounds pretty messed up, but….

MD: Well, you talked about John Cage. If

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you listen to that stuff…

Spüg: It's incredibly unlistenable.

MD: Right.

Spüg: I've got a couple of John Cage records. His notation is beautiful, like works of art.

MD: Yeah, I've got one that comes with this sheet of instructions for where the tonality should be at any given time. Like, "At thirty seconds, turn off all the high end."

Spüg: How whacked out is that?

MD: But it's not just intellectual. Bands like Skinny Puppy and Cabaret Voltaire, or even Mudvayne, wouldn't be possible if people like Cage didn't break down some walls.

Spüg: I totally agree. I'm the biggest Skinny Puppy fan. But because of the entertainment factor, heavy music especially has forgotten who its parents are. It's lost its ties with modern art. This connection, I feel, vitally needs to be maintained. Not to say that everybody needs to be a modern art fan like me. There is something powerful about just rocking out. But I think this needs to have a presence in the world.

MD: Art and music share common concepts, like balance….

Spüg: You're talking about the formal qualities of painting. That's an incredibly important thing. That was a big thing with modern painters, breaking European qualities of composition—relational painting, balance.

MD: There's that idea of "comfort," like, how far can you take it and still feel balanced? Your music seems to reflect this concern.

Spüg: There is a deliberate attempt on our part to introduce monotony, anti-climax, or discomfort—but with a specific objective, perhaps to draw attention to something, to maybe open somebody up to a different way of approaching the composition. I think those things can teach people how to deal with change in their day-to-day lives, how to live, how to cope.

MD: Do you think "highbrow" concepts like these aren't taken seriously enough in our society, in regards to helping people with everyday problems?

Spüg: Absolutely. I think it is unfortunate that people have lost sight of the therapeutic value of art. Call me crazy, but I *live* this, this satiates me, it makes me so fulfilled to experience art, reflecting what somebody else is doing. And to feel like I have an opportunity to create art of my own—that's the most vital thing in my life. Being entertained…I don't know what that really means anymore.

MD: Let me hit you with an idea. I'd like to throw some words at you and have you free-associate. The first word is "math."

Spüg: Number is the most powerful, nonverbal, and universal way to communicate. To me, speaking in numbers allows you to cross gender, culture, time—and to communicate something universal. So I find it to be the most essential building block of just about everything I do. I don't know about you, but when you look at this piece of art in this book, don't you see a number? I experience that numerically. In the late '60s through the early '70s, number was experimented with as a compositional tool. And that's something I use specifically in my playing.

MD: The school of music commonly associated with numbers is prog rock.

Spüg: We are not that. That's not what we do.

MD: Well, whether you are talking about Yes or King Crimson…

Spüg: I hate King Crimson referred to as

prog rock. But I'm with you.

MD: I can see what you mean. The best prog rock bands are so much more than prog rock, like Crimson and early Genesis…

Spüg: …and Yes.

MD: Their drummer, Bill Bruford, was actually one of my free-association words. Did you spend much time listening to him?

Spüg: As a kid I had a Bill Bruford solo record, though I haven't listened to it in years. But I didn't get into King Crimson until recently. Their current drummer, Pat Mastelotto, blows my mind. He doesn't play or write like anyone I've ever heard. I think he's overlooked because he's not flashy. His drumming on *Damaged*, by Robert Fripp and David Sylvian, is sick.

MD: Back to the free-association. "Jazz."

Spüg: Free speaking, free associating, anti-composition, non-relational…. Henry Miller—definitely Henry Miller. I think the best jazz is Henry Miller. I think he understood the process of composition in a jazz sense of being able to allow it to come out of him, to find those spaces, to give a voice to the music. His literature, like *Tropic Of Capricorn*, is just so out there. For fiction he's probably my favorite writer.

MD: What about him are you attracted to?

Spüg: It's completely ecstatic. And maybe that's at the heart of what jazz is about. I'm not jazz. That's contradictory to the spirit of what I'm doing.

MD: I've noticed this a couple of times: Despite the things that you are really into, you don't necessarily define your work by them.

Spüg: I'm satisfying myself with what I do, but then there are other things that I need from art that I don't need to express *through* my art.

MD: "Quiet."

Spüg: Silence is the most positive way to express the truth, if there is such a thing. When the mind is quiet, one has an opportunity to experience those moments, something that we could maybe say is truth.

I think it's really important—and all the great artists have shown this—it's not necessarily what you say, it's what you *don't* say. The blank spaces that you leave. But I think it's important to be loud to contrast the quiet, to express that.

MD: "Fame."

Spüg: "Fame is a liar, fame is a tramp." That's from my first band, the one that I was talking about before, that I had the name for. Great lyricist in that band. Actually, I've had a really good run with lyricists in all the bands I've been with. I think that's something I'm unconsciously attracted to and always try to associate myself with. The guy who wrote for my first band was a brilliant writer, and he had a song called "Fame's First Kiss." At the end of the song, all four of us in the band would sit on stage. I'd come out from behind my drumkit and sit down on the floor and beat on an old snare, and then the singer would crouch down with me and we'd both sing together, and then the bass guitarist and the guitarist would join in. None of us could sing—we had horrible voices—but we had these polyrhythmic "rounds," and that's how the song ended. It was really cool. "Fame is a liar, fame is a tramp."

So I think I've always had that attitude. It's a double-edged sword. I can't deny that there's a part of me that wants it, wants to be recognized. And then there is a part of me that feels guilty for it and then judges myself, you know? I'm also very frightened of having my privacy invaded. So it's an

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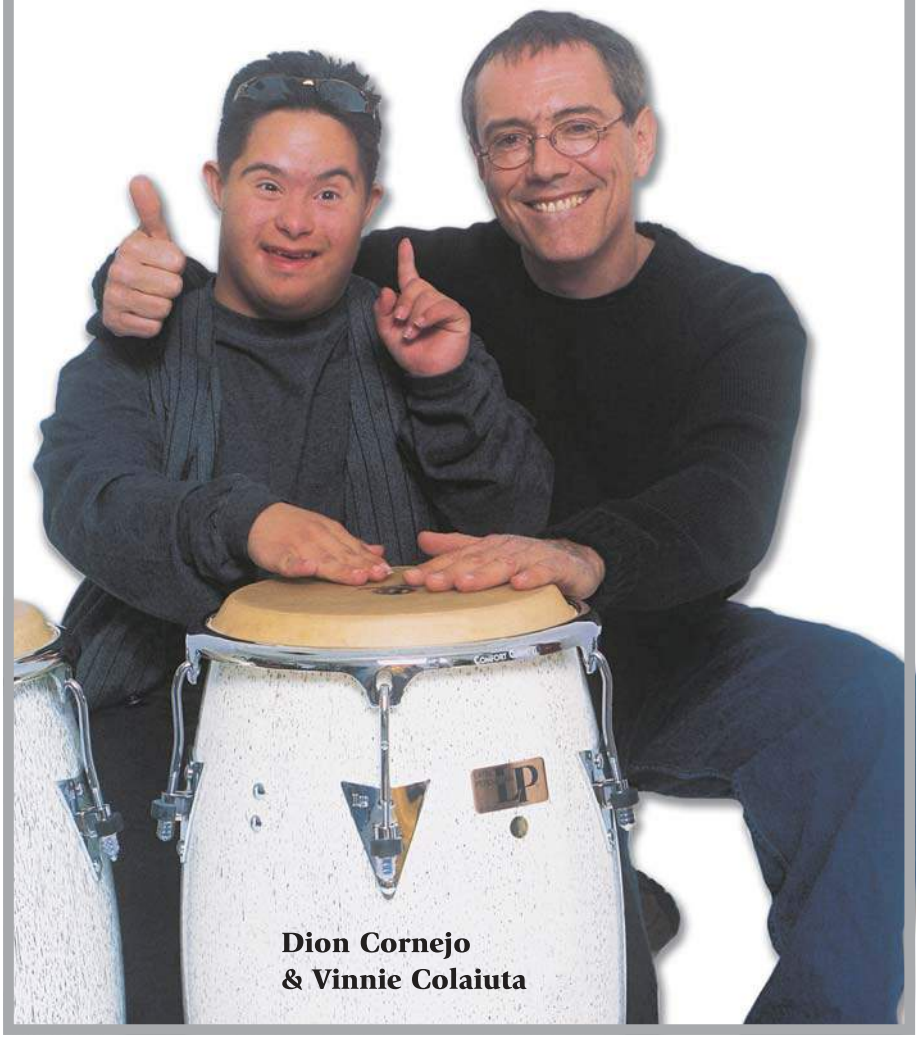


Dion Cornejo & Vinnie Colaiuta

extreme contradiction.

MD: "Funk."

Spüg: Depression. That's the first thing that comes to my mind—"being in a funk." I think it's interesting that the genre of music called funk also has to do with a term used to describe feeling weird. Now we associate the term with things like *Solid Gold*, Bootsy Collins, James Brown. But maybe funk was a reaction to something else.

MD: Some early funk wasn't the cliché thing, like happy, poppy feel-good music. Some Isley Brothers and Funkadelic stuff is pretty dark.

Spüg: So maybe there is something else going on. A lot of it was probably poverty-driven, outsider-driven, which I mean in the most respectful way: black culture that was exempted from typical society and disrespected.

MD: Of course, there's such a drum connection in funk music.

Spüg: Groove is a really important part of our music. I've always found funk kind of sexy, and I think there is a natural feeling that is very satisfying when you are playing funky and groovy. Our society is so oppressive when it comes to sexuality, funk and groove and stuff like that is an opportunity for people, in a sort of masked way, to express sexuality. It's very satisfying. And I definitely equate songwriting and the interaction of playing music as a sexual experience.

MD: Well, good music is all about tension & release.

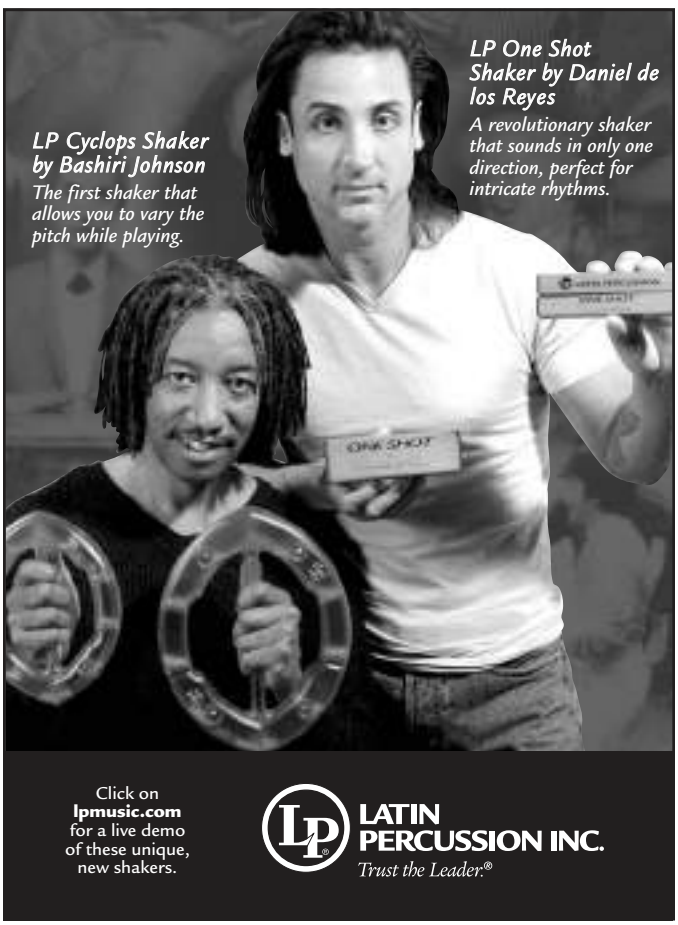
Spüg: Exactly. And it's also a marriage of everything. You are playing together, you are playing in rhythm. I'm sorry if I have to say it, but there's something about rhythm and making love…. When you kiss somebody for the first time, you know if that's the person for you. At least for me, I know that when I kissed this woman that I'm in love with now [snaps fingers] the rhythm was there. Some people just can't do it together.

MD: "KISS," the band.

Spüg: Who? Never heard of them. [laughs] I don't think they ever made any bones about the fact that they weren't about anything deeper than "I want to rock and roll all night." That's the antithesis of what my band is trying to say. The only thing we have in common with them is makeup.

I always stress that we've never identified with the makeup. Unfortunately most people don't have the opportunity to see us on stage night after night. I change my makeup every night. The images you see on *L.D. 50*, the black & white stripes, I've never even played on stage like that. And outside of doing the video for *Dig*, that was the only time in my life that I've had black & white stripes on. Makeup has always been a medium for us to express ourselves, specifically on stage. It's never been something to hide my personal identity. I refuse to do video interviews in makeup, for instance.

Outside of that, what can you say? KISS rules. Being counterculture but making it marketably viable—I think they paved the way for bands like us. As a kid I can remember having *Kiss Alive* on vinyl. My dad had it, and I'd throw it on and set up paint cans and pillows and get the wooden spoons and beat along. Of course, I *really* wanted to be Gene Simmons. [laughs] But then, I think every eight-year-old kid wanted to be Gene Simmons.



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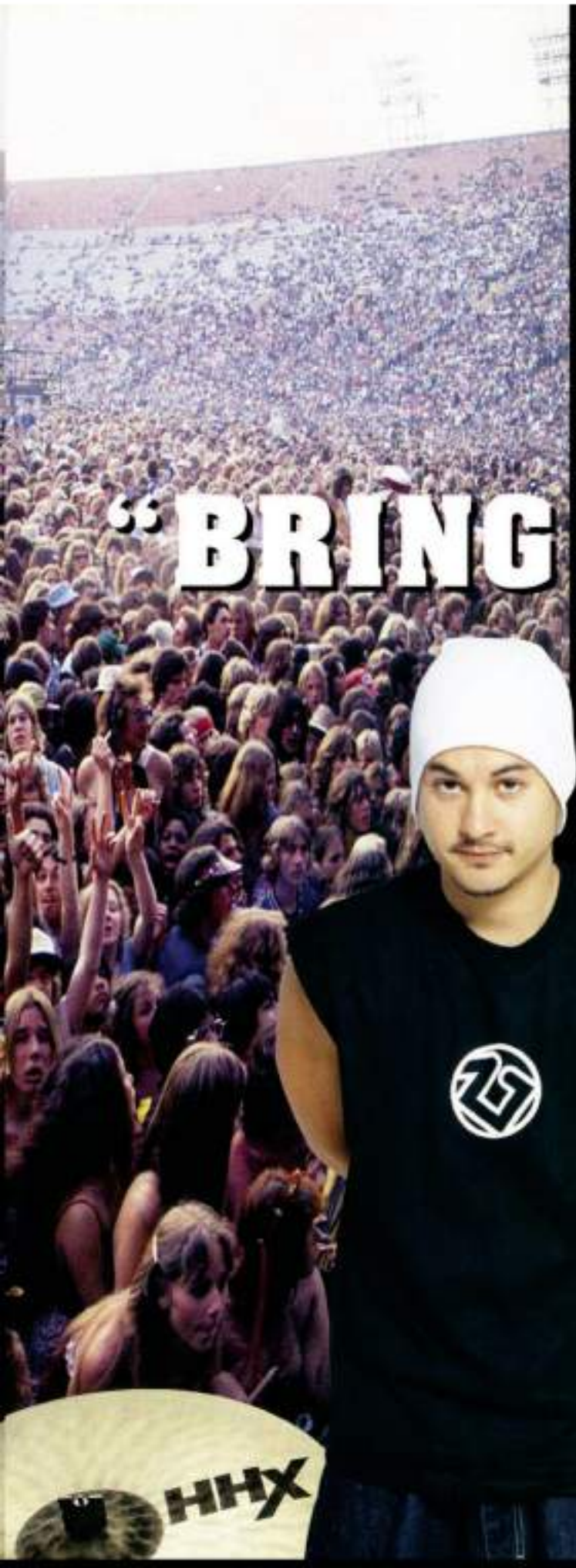

"Playing to crowds like this is very exciting! It's definitely a long way from the days when we played in front of a couple of friends and a few bartenders at a small club in Los Angeles. It can be intimidating, but it's an amazing rush as well!

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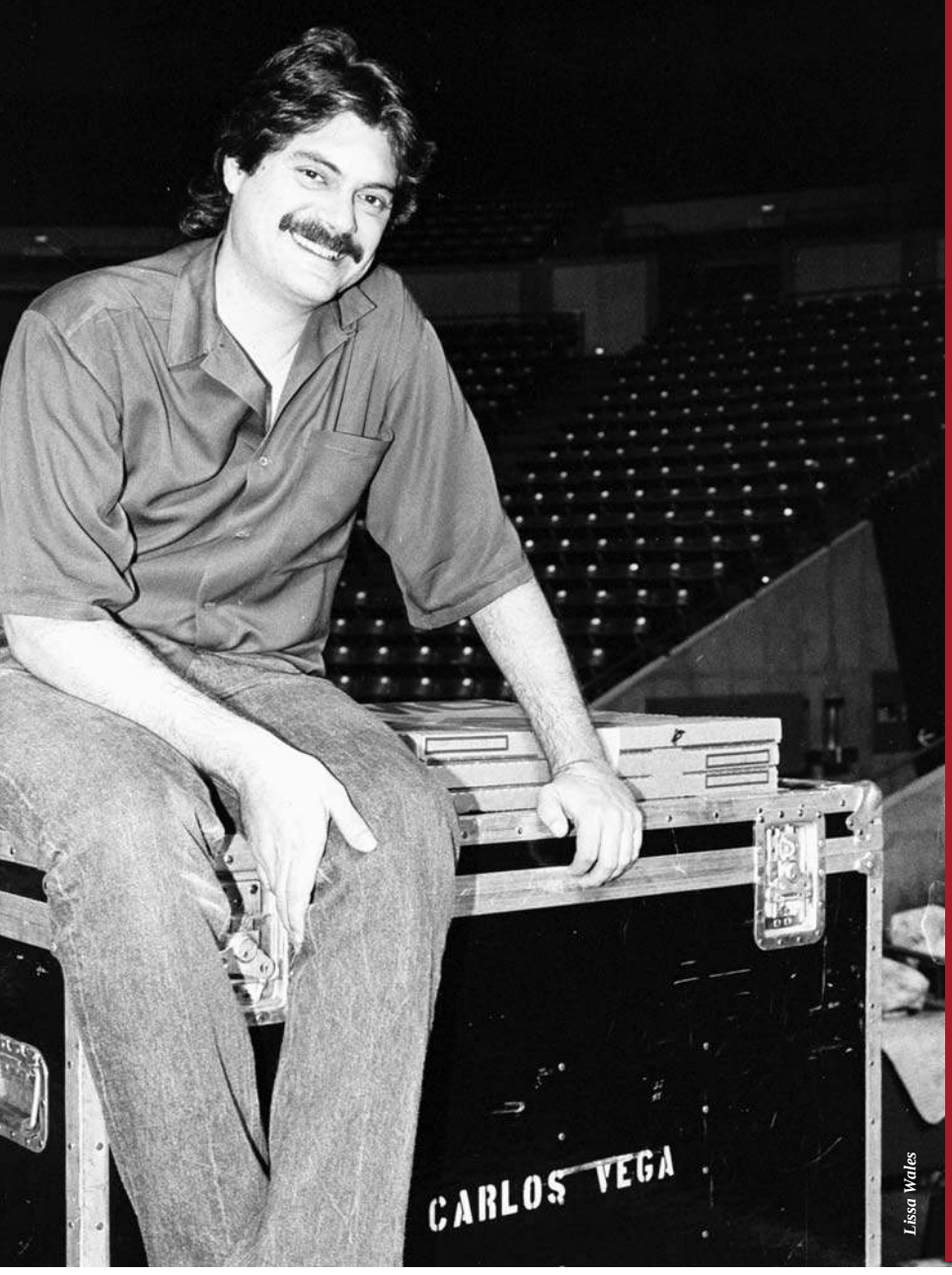
CARLOS VEGA
A Musical Life

by Robyn Flans

The entire musical community was shocked when, on April 8, 1998, Carlos Vega took his own life. No one saw it coming. And to those of us looking from the outside in, it seemed incomprehensible that someone with that kind of talent and success—and with a wonderful wife like Teri and two beautiful daughters, Marisa and Lexi—could do something like that. But no one knows what it is to live in someone else's skin, and no one can truly know the demons one battles or what brings a person to that moment of despair.

Lissa Wales



Lissa Wales

Carlos *Remembered*

So many musicians had the opportunity to work with Carlos in the studio, on the road, and on the various live shows that somehow he was never too busy to do. The general consensus among those who worked with him and knew him was that he was an amazing team player on stage and off—and a funny guy.

Vega was on tour with James Taylor just prior to his death, and because they were in such close contact, Taylor was able to offer his perspective on Vega's predicament. "The way I look at it," Taylor offers, "it's as if he had been hit by a truck. I don't think of it as something that was inevitable or a suicide that grew out of his life circumstance. I've always been of the opinion that something physiological happened to Carlos.

"We had been in Europe for a couple of months," Taylor continues, "and Carlos had been having a really rough time. He almost had to go home. He wasn't sleeping, he was very agitated, he had terrible headaches for about a month, and his heart rate was elevated. He was concerned that there was something physically wrong. He got a scan and some x-rays, and he went to see a neurologist and a few other doctors, but since we were on the road it was impossible to have more than one day in one town, so none of it was ever connected or put together.

"At one point, Teri and the girls came over to be with Carlos, and they really got behind him and said, 'You can make it, you can do this,' and he did. Carlos made it through the tour, and after the tour everyone breathed a sigh of relief that he would be able to go home and have whatever was happening to him taken care of.

"Carlos was still unable to sleep," Taylor continues. "I think that's what drove him over the edge. He couldn't get more than an hour or two of sleep a night, and after a while that drove him to distraction. Something physiological was wrong with him. I think he became so agitated and desperate for some peace. I know how much he loved his daughters and his wife and how important his family was to him. They were crucial. He was a wonderful father, so I know he must have been in a completely desperate place."

We remain saddened that Carlos came to that point and cut his life short. But we're grateful for the pleasure he gave his family, friends, and fans. We celebrate the immense body of work he left behind—a great variety of creative passion.

Gregg Bissonette

I did a double drum night with Carlos in 1995 with the David Garfield band at La Va Lee jazz club in Los Angeles. It was really fun to jam all night long with him. We really connected. It felt so comfortable playing with him, because he had an ability to put things in a slightly behind-the-beat pocket that felt so good. He was able to play with great intensity but make it never feel like it was rushing. The pockets he put the grooves in felt so great.

Carlos and I both had the pleasure of studying with the great Cuban drummer Changuito on the same two days when he was in LA. We talked constantly about the lessons. He had a passion for learning and playing the drums. We also talked a lot about two of our favorite drummers and friends, Vinnie Colaiuta and Jeff Porcaro. And I had an incredible time recently, trying to play some of Carlos's James Taylor grooves this summer when I did some dates with James. Nobody could ever play that gig the way that Carlos did.

One of the things that Jimmy Johnson said about Carlos was that he had the innate ability to pick the perfect tempo and follow James' voice and guitar. When you listen to my favorite CD, *James Taylor Live*, you see how comfortable he made it for the musicians. Carlos also had a fantastic sense of humor, and he made me laugh and feel great.

Jimmy Johnson (bassist)

Among the many things I admired about Carlos, I will cite one small but significant musical gift that he had. This was his uncanny ability to pull a song's tempo out of thin air. He never used a reference metronome but could simply hear a song in his head and somehow divine the perfect tempo from his internal clock.

A beautiful example of this was during the production of James Taylor's *Live* CD. In November of 1992, we played a tour of fourteen shows, each recorded live to multi-track tape. These tapes were then taken into the studio for post-production mixing and assembly. While reviewing the tapes, producers Don Grolnick and George Massenburg discovered the song tempos to be virtually *identical* from night to night. Amazing.

George Massenburg (producer)

It's really hard to say what my best Carlos memory is, or even the best Carlos story. I remember him as a man of grace and equanimity under pressure of any kind…and of his joy when he was around the cats. I marveled at the incredible contrast of his lightness of spirit compared with his thunderous, precise groove. I felt that we could always rely on him to find the pocket. To this day, I marvel at his playing.

When we lost Jeff [Porcaro], I took some small solace in that there would always be Carlos. What a fool I was….

Luis Conte

I remember seeing Carlos play for the first time with Willie Bobo, probably in 1975, and totally digging his playing. I went backstage, as I had met Willie before. He knew I was Cuban, so he said, "Hey, you gotta meet this other cat. Hey Carlos, here's one of yours. You cats have to hang out." We met, and it was instant love. I remember one of the first things he told me was, "I just love to have fun. As long as I do my little gigs and have enough money for my drums and my car, I'm cool."

I ended up working with Carlos in a band called Karizma. Oddly enough, I just played at the Baked Potato the other night with Brandon Fields, and all of us in that band had played with Carlos at one time. We did some tunes that we used to play with Carlos. I didn't say anything to anybody, but he was in my mind all night because I miss his feel so much.

Carlos was a surgeon of the groove. When he played, the groove was just there. The way he played was effortless, and the music didn't sound hard to play. For me to play percussion over something he was playing was like sliding onto a comfortable mattress—always.

Lenny Castro

Carlos and I were very close. I became godfather of his first born and he became godfather of my first born. I miss him so much. The two of us were like two little kids together. When we got together, we had our own little language and stupid words. Our wives used to hate it. They'd sit around and say, "What's wrong with those guys?"

Musically, we did so much together, from Olivia Newton-John and Larry Carlton to Laura Branigan, and it was always an adventure. I always knew something great was going to happen if he was there. When we played at the Baked Potato with Karizma, though, was when we'd really let go. We weren't held back by microphones, tape machines, and playing a chart. The music we were playing with Karizma was *our* music, and we played it the way we felt it. Those are the most memorable gigs. At times, the music transcended the physical world.

I still find it amazing that he always worked at refining his drumming. I used to think he was the perfect cat, that he was there and didn't have to study anymore. But he'd always be studying. Carlos would go to Dick Wilson to reassess his technique. He was always working on his craft. A lot of guys don't do that. They figure they're playing and that's it. But he was constantly trying to take it further. Also, his attitude was wonderful in sessions. People loved his attitude. He was an incredible cat.

•

In our 1988 interview, Carlos explained himself to me thusly: "There are two sides to me: There's a session guy and there's another guy who will always be in love with the way Tony Williams plays, the things he did with Miles. I work as a session guy, but I play jazz in the clubs at night. I just love music."

The list of artists Carlos worked with is as diverse as his tastes were—from Lee Ritenour to Barry Manilow and everything in between, including Dave Grusin, Neil Diamond, Vince Gill, Placido Domingo, Bonnie Raitt, Peter Allen, and Caldera, not to mention the classic Michael Sembello track "Maniac," Olivia Newton-John's "Physical," and Sheena Easton's "Strut." And although James Taylor might have seemed a tad on the mellow side for Vega, he occupied that drum seat for a decade, always taking joy in the material.

"It's great music," Carlos said in '88. "It's tame, but I play freer with that than with a lot of bands I've toured with, because a lot of bands want it to be like the record every night. James never plays it like the record, so we actually have freedom to stretch. You can't always look at it like the big pay-off, the big fancy shit. But sometimes you can get the same feeling with what you *don't* play, with the holes you leave."

Bassist Lee Sklar brought Vega into the James Taylor band in the midst of a tour. "It's always a scramble when somebody can't make the rest of a tour or when pressing circumstances occur," Taylor explains. "It means a lot of extra rehearsal. The new guy has to come up to speed real fast. It's tough, but Carlos came in and nailed it. It worked immediately, and increasingly it turned out to be a great working relationship for me."

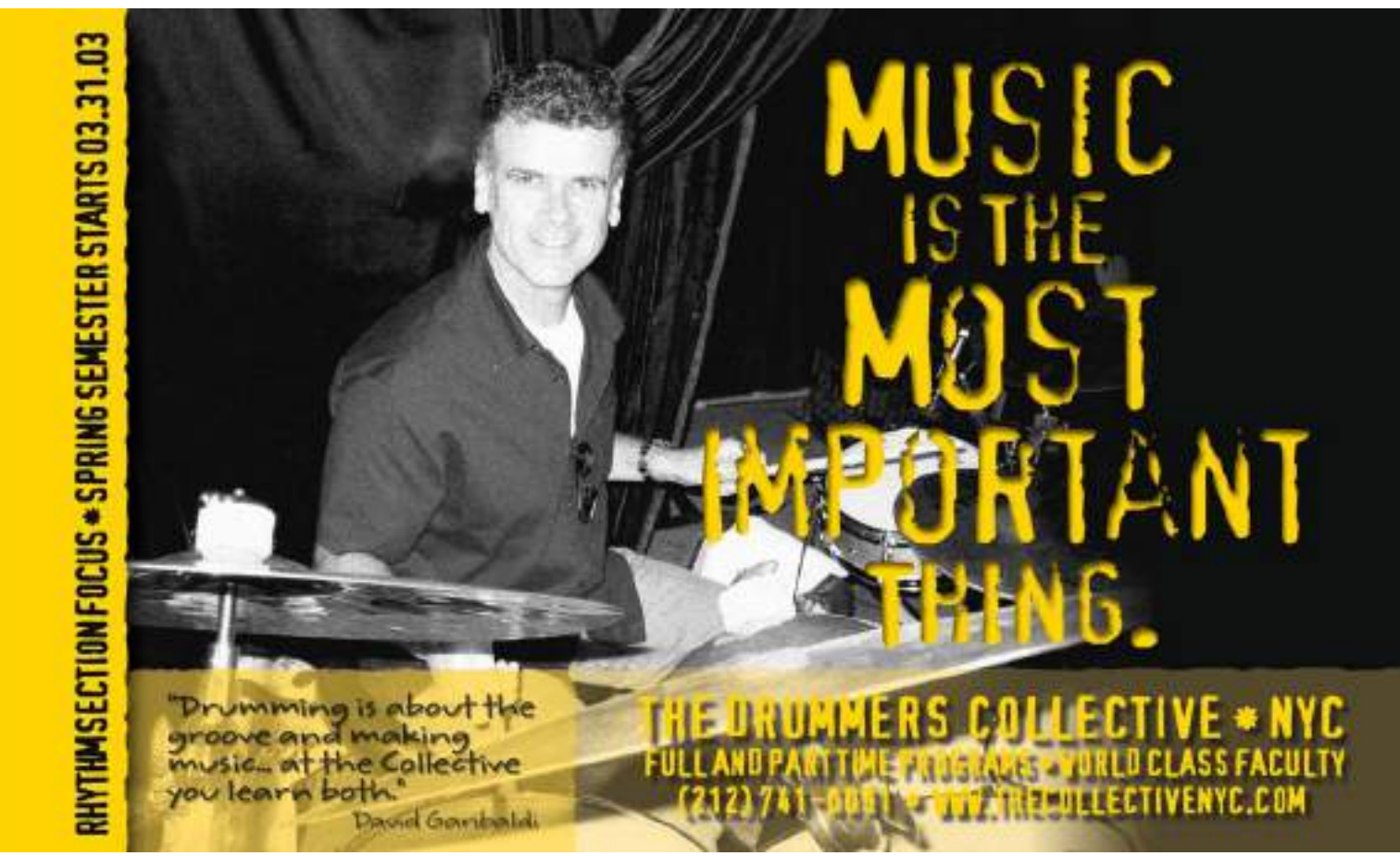
Carlos brought exactly what was needed to the Taylor gig. "I look for someone whose dynamics work with the rest of the group," James says. "And the thing that limits the dynamics the most is the fact that I'm an acoustic guitar player and I write songs that aren't particularly heavy-handed. Occasionally we amp it up, but it's not a heavy-hitting kind of a gig. It requires someone who can play very musically, listen, and be a team player.

"There are a number of special things about Carlos as a player," James continues. "He had real control over his tempos. A lot of people will use a metronome to remind them where a song is supposed to start, and that's a good thing to learn how to do. It's

Lissa Wales

good to have a place to start with a song, especially when the arrangement is new to the drummer. But Carlos had an innate sense of knowing where the tempo of a song should be. He used to warm up on a practice pad for, I'd say, about half an hour before we'd go on, and I always got the sense he was kind of calibrating himself. He did a very specific sort of practice every night, and it started extremely slowly and went through various things. I always felt he was setting his clock, as well as warming up his chops.

"Another remarkable thing about Carlos



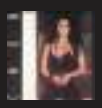
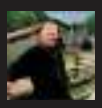
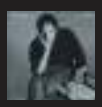
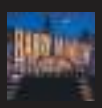
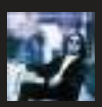
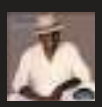
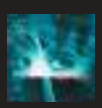
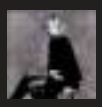
was that he was born in Cuba and learned to play there," Taylor states, "so his first experience was as a Latin drummer. But he was definitely a Western, American rock drummer. More than anybody else I've ever worked with, he existed in both worlds."

Taylor recalls that during the first record that Vega made with him, *Never Die Young*, the songwriter spent time at Vega's home so they could run through ideas together. "I wanted to bring him in and use his input rhythmically very early on in the songs. He was a solid contributor in the studio, and aside from basic tracks, he did percussion overdubs. It's always been my thought that it's a waste to ask people to work with you and not invite them to play what they hear.

"The most remarkable recording situation that I remember was with Carlos, Clifford Carter, and Jimmy Johnson in May, 1996, when we went to Martha's Vineyard to make *Hourglass* in a rented summer house. It required that everybody be self-contained and come up and set up themselves. It was very brave of everybody to go up and set up a quick studio to cut this album. Carlos had to help Frank [Filipetti, producer] mike things to get the right sound. The hardest thing to record in that context was the drums, because everything else was direct. But Carlos was totally into it. He was completely game and loved it."

Bass player Lee Sklar (who was one of Carlos's original musical heroes) says Carlos's absence leaves a giant hole in the music business. "There are just people you come across in your life who fill a spot that's really hard to fathom not having filled," Sklar says. "Carlos did that both musically and personally. He was one of those unique, gifted drummers with a special presence. As a bass player, every once in a while you're given a Carlos, which spoils you. It wasn't so much technical prowess, although he had impressive chops. But what I loved about playing with Carlos was his pocket. His feel was so deep. It was effortless to play with him.

"Carlos was one of those guys who, if we were cutting with a click, never in a million years would you know there was a click track," Sklar continues. "He could weave around it in such a cool way that it

A Taste Of Carlos

To give you an idea of the broad nature of Carlos Vega's recording career, here's a small taste of his twenty years as a session master. (We don't have room to print every recording Carlos appeared on.)

Artist	Recording
The Bangles	Different Light
David Benoit	Urban Daydreams
George Benson	Give Me The Night
Stephen Bishop	On & On
Laura Branigan	Branigan
Peabo Bryson	Straight From The Heart
Caldera	Caldera
Shaun Cassidy	Room Service
Dori Caymmi	Dori Caymmi
Peter Cetera	You're The Inspiration
Cher	Heart Of Stone
Stanley Clarke	East River Drive
Michael Crawford	EFX!
Neil Diamond	Lovescape
Placido Domingo	De Mi Alma Latina
Sheena Easton	Private Heaven
Vince Gill	Way Back Home
Andy Griffith	I Love To Tell The Story
Dave Grusin with Lee Ritenour	Harlequin
Sophie B. Hawkins	Timbre
Freddie Hubbard	Bundle Of Joy
Julio Iglesias	1100 Bel Air Place
Al Jarreau	This Time
Patti LaBelle	Winner In You
Madonna	Dick Tracy soundtrack
Manhattan Transfer	Bodies And Souls
Barry Manilow	Showstoppers
Ricky Martin	Me Amarás
Curtis Mayfield	Love Is The Place
Reba McEntire	Read My Mind
Bette Midler	Some People's Lives
Joni Mitchell	Turbulent Indigo
Randy Newman	Land Of Dreams
Olivia Newton-John	Physical
Bonnie Raitt	Nine Lives
Dianne Reeves	Never Too Far
Lee Ritenour	Banded Together
Linda Ronstadt	We Ran
Vonda Shepard	It's Good Eve
Barbra Streisand	Till I Loved You
James Taylor	Never Die Young
James Taylor	New Moon Shine
James Taylor	Live
James Taylor	Hourglass
Randy Travis	Heroes And Friends
Sarah Vaughan	Brazilian Romance
The Weather Girls	Success
Nancy Wilson	Love, Nancy

Lissa Wales

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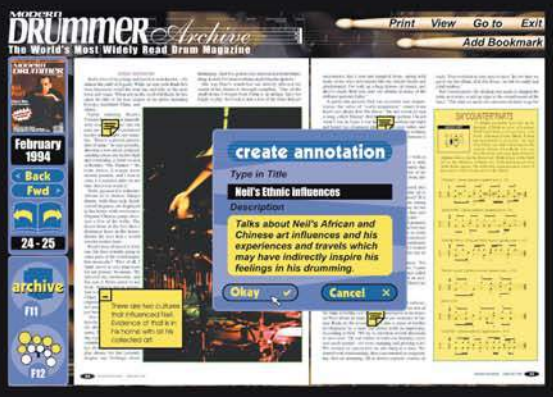

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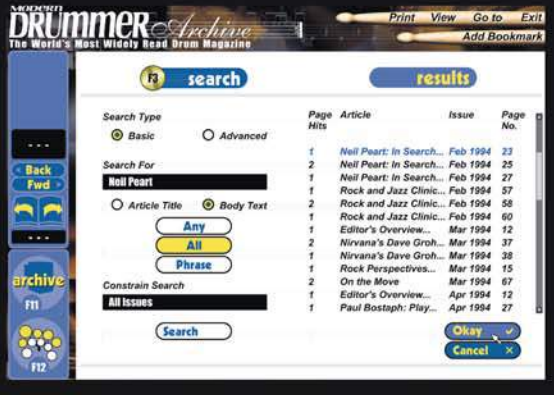

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Lissa Wales

Vega's Gear

According to DW, the last set they made for Carlos in 1995 was a black cherry stain burst lacquer with brass hardware. The kit consisted of 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 toms (all mounted on stands), an 18x22 kick, and 5½x13 solid-shell snare drum.

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never felt stiff. Where other guys feel metronomic, Carlos felt fluid and musical.

"We did tons of records together," Sklar says. "We did The Weather Girls' 'It's Raining Men' and the Laura Branigan hit 'Gloria.' There are so many times when I'm doing sessions now where I wish that he was the guy I was looking at in the studio.

"Personally, Carlos was a wonderful, giving, sharing, decent, smart, funny human being. We spent years on the road together traveling the world. We used to do hand gestures to each other on stage, which were absolutely meaningless—it was just us goofing—and we'd read reviews of concerts where they were fascinated how we cued each other. All those things were a big piece of our mutual life, which doesn't exist anymore, and that saddens me deeply."

Lee adds that one of the projects he did with Carlos that was particularly memorable was Vince Gill's *High Lonesome*

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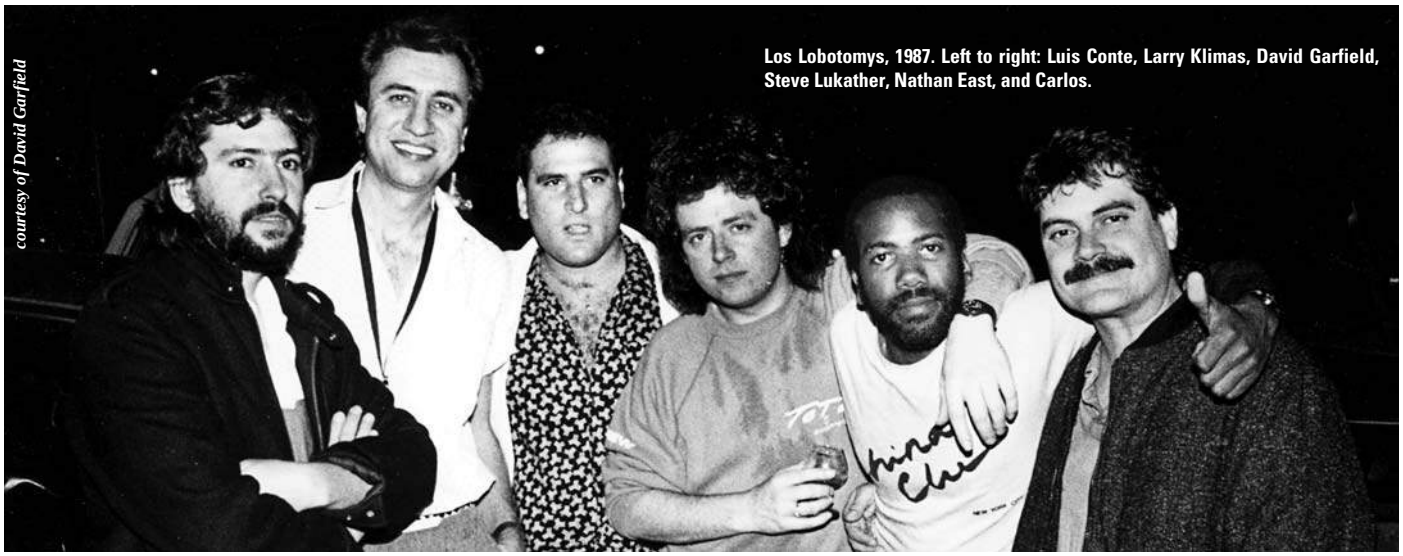

courtesy of David Garfield

Los Lobotomys, 1987. Left to right: Luis Conte, Larry Klimas, David Garfield, Steve Lukather, Nathan East, and Carlos.

Sound. "There is some beautiful stuff on that," the bassist says. "It was always fun to get Carlos down to Nashville, because he brought something different in his approach to country music."

Vince Gill agrees. "I always tried to find a player who would bring a totally different mindset to the project. We all have a tendency to play what's expected or do the predictable—not meaning to imply anything negative about the players at home. But I knew of Carlos through all of his work, as well as a record [*The Way Back Home*] he did with me in the mid-'80s.

"What you want when you're making music are musicians who are supportive, guys who are positive, and people who, during the breaks, aren't running to their cell phones, disinterested in the music," Gill says. "I want people who are going to throw in their two cents. I like the whole democratic process of everybody contributing. The musicians have a lot to do with how records feel. I want their help in making sure I'm picking the best-feeling track. I would say to Carlos, 'Which one feels better? You played this. I know which one I like, but from your perspective, which one was the pocket?'

"I liked the way Carlos would treat things. He could come from a different, unexpected place, like on 'Don't Let Our Love Start Slippin' Away' [from *I Still Believe In You*].

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That's probably the best-feeling track I've ever recorded, and that was Carlos with Willie Weeks on bass. *High Lonesome Sound* was Carlos and Lee Sklar. From that album, a few tracks stand out: 'Pretty Little Adriana,' and two tracks that were particularly fun for me, 'Down To New Orleans' and 'Tell Me Lover.' Those were never singles or even recorded with that intention. I just thought they'd be pretty funky tracks, and musically they were a bit of a departure for me."

What was particularly interesting about *High Lonesome Sound* was that the tunes were recorded as a band, with all the musicians playing at the same time. "I've never been much on building the track," Vince relates. "I don't think music is about playing to a click track for four minutes. I think it's about the musicians hearing the lyric—how it's phrased—and what they play off of it. I always knew that what Carlos would bring to the table would be fabulous. He had a musical heart."

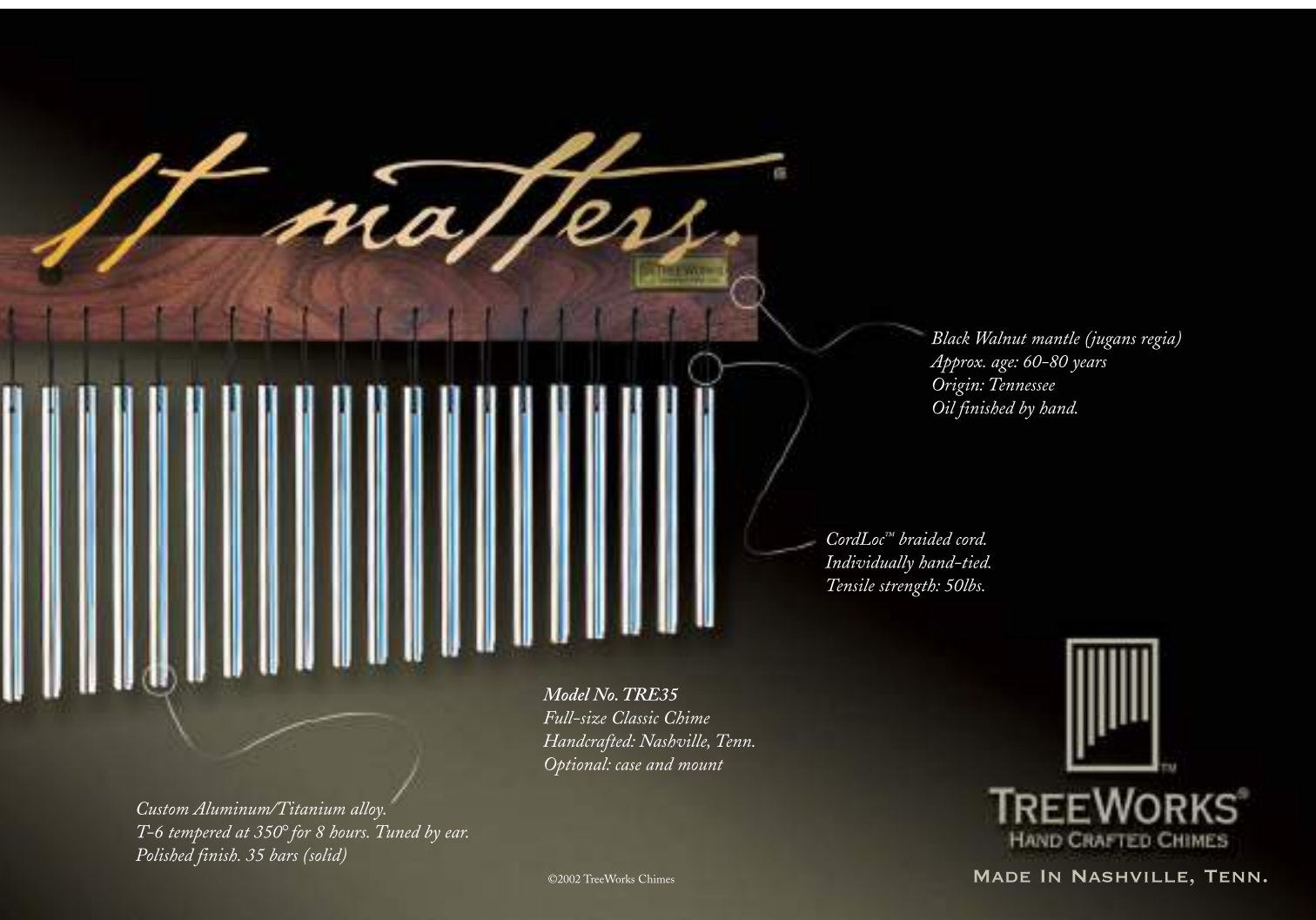
Vega's musical heart was born in Cuba, where he would get together on street corners with friends and playing with spoons on a big frying pan that was nailed to a 2x4. By the time he moved to the States, at age nine, Vega was absorbed in reading the backs of record albums. He closely followed the work of Jim Keltner, Jeff Porcaro, and Jim Gordon, as well as focusing on his jazz playing ability, which was inspired by John Guerin, Tony Williams, and his discovery of Steve Gadd while at a Stan Kenton camp. At Eagle Rock High School, Carlos studied with a teacher by the name of John Rinaldo, who, according to Carlos, "harped on time."

"He used to stand in front of the band with a 2B marching drumstick," Carlos said in 1988, "and he'd bang out quarter notes on a podium, yelling, 'You're rushing, you're dragging.' He was like a human metronome, and he used to drive us crazy. By the time I left, there was a big canyon carved in the podium!" Around that time, Carlos also studied with Ralph Humphrey, who taught him a great deal about odd times and feel.

Immediately after high school, in 1974, Vega went on the road with a lounge band, playing Holiday Inns and Sheraton Hotels across the country. He recalled it as his most important dues-paying experience. "I recommend that kind of gig for any young musician, because when you're in high school, you play in band class and you jam after school. But when you have to do six sets a night, five nights a week, it really does something to your playing. You need hours behind the drums at that point. It was really good for me, even though I hated it. Sometimes I'd turn my drumset left-handed because I got so bored."

A brutal road experience at twenty years of age (at which time he lost half of his drumset due to the tour's disorganized nature) definitely provided another learning experience for Vega. He was working for jazz great Freddie Hubbard at the time. While the gig was a great learning opportunity, it wasn't easy. "Freddie would say, 'You ain't got no left hand; your left hand ain't shit.' He was right, but that wasn't the way to say it."

Carlos looked at the tour as more dues-paying, and after that spent some time working on getting his playing together, studying with such teachers as Murray Spivack and Dick Wilson. "Dick is really crazy about technique—release, tension…all those things are so essential," Carlos explained. "He talks about playing the drums like walking like a panther through the forest. You



can't be all uptight. It should be relaxed, so when you strike, you throw the weight.

"It's the same thing Murray Spivack teaches," Carlos continued, "like when a pitcher throws a baseball. He winds up and throws it at the last minute. Everything is loose until that last minute when the wrist snaps, and that's where you get all your power from. You're holding the stick tight, but you're loose. If you want to do fast double strokes, you've got to squeeze harder than you would if you were doing it at a slower tempo. So it's just all the little pressure changes that take place in the hand as you're playing various tempos."

Keyboardist David Garfield, who initially hooked up Carlos with Willie Bobo and then Freddie Hubbard, founded the band Karizma in 1975, which set Vega's heart on fire. "Karizma is my savior," Carlos said. "Having that outlet is really essential. Being able to play what comes off the top of your head is such an important concept if you like jazz and that kind of music."

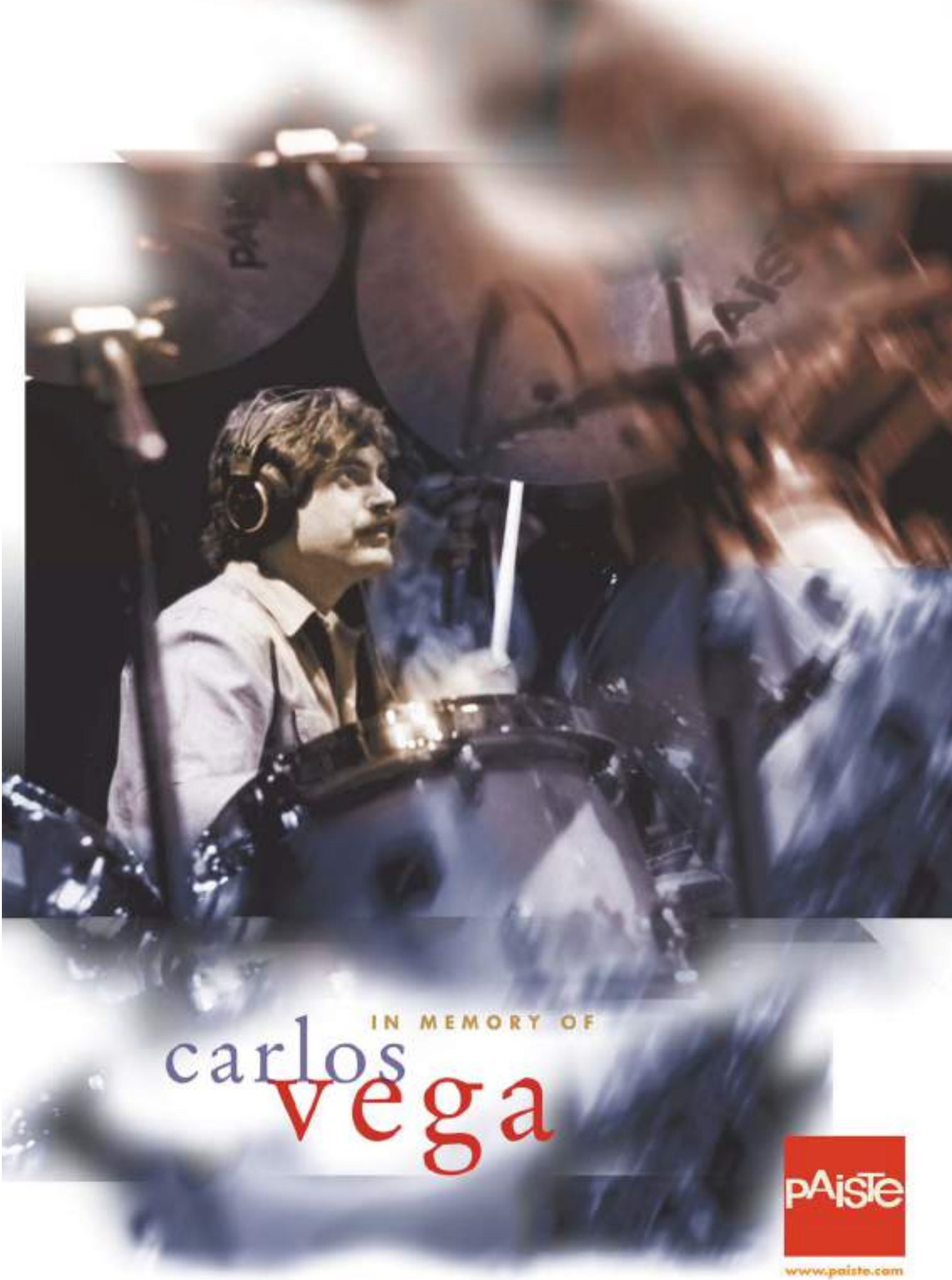
"He was incredibly tasty and had perfect feel," says Garfield, who met Vega years before, when the Eagle Rock High School stage band traveled to his hometown in Missouri. "I had him sit in on this gig I was doing where I was playing keyboards and drums," he says. "After I heard Carlos play, I decided to sell my drumset. He was the best drummer I had ever played with, and he was only seventeen. He had it all—chops, feel, ears, great time, and taste."

When Garfield moved to LA a year later, Vega was already working with a club band at night, with the LACC College jazz band, and with Rural Still Life, the second generation of the Porcaro family band. But when Karizma began to showcase in '75, the buzz led Carlos to the Willie Bobo gig, his first real pro job. Vega eventually left that gig to go with Caldera, after which he suffered through the Hubbard tour with Garfield. Upon his return to LA, Michael Lloyd began to hire Vega for all the teen-idol stars he was producing, such as Shaun Cassidy and Leif Garrett. In fact, Vega became so busy that LA newcomer Vinnie Colaiuta took his place in Karizma for a time.

"Carlos and Vinnie played together on a couple of my records," says Garfield, who has some of these recordings available on his Web site, www.creatchy.com (on which there's also a "Tribute To Carlos" page). "On *Forever In The Arms Of Love*, our fourth CD, they play together on two songs, 'Toast For Eli' and 'Aliens.' There were five Karizma albums on which Carlos was the main drummer, and he played on all my solo records.

"On the first Karizma record, *Dream Come True*," Garfield continues, "there's a track with Carlos and Jeff Porcaro together called 'Blues For Ronnie,' which is very cool. Jeff was Carlos's hero, and he had always talked about how Jeff and Jim Keltner had played together on a record. So we brought Jeff in to play with Carlos. I would definitely recommend the third Karizma album, *All The Way Live*, for anyone who wants to hear Carlos in a live setting. I would also suggest listening to the self-titled CD by guitarist Dori Caymmi for a great example of Carlos's Brazilian playing. He was one of the first guys in town who could play that style. And when he worked with Olivia Newton-John, that was the first time I had ever heard of anyone creating a loop."

James Taylor was impressed with the fact that Vega was the eternal student. "We went to hear Ivan Lins in New York, and there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Carlos Vega

was a Cuban player on drums. Carlos heard something that drummer played and took it into the studio, where he played it on a song of mine called 'Another Day' [from *Hourglass*]. You won't hear what he's playing on the drumkit anywhere else. It's very subtle, and it lifted the song."

Taylor also recommends listening to his *Live* album to hear Vega on his classic "Mexico." "We re-arranged 'Mexico' to have an extended introduction and a fade. If you listen to that, it sounds like it went from Mexico, to Puerto Rico, to Cuba. Carlos completely turned that around for us. It was a different tune after that. It really was great to be able to work with Carlos. I miss him a lot. He was a great guy. He wasn't a saint, he was just a real mensch, a real person."

There was little pretense about Carlos, who, in the choices he made, both playing-wise and equipment-wise, never went the political route that many musicians feel they must take in order to get ahead. His consideration was always quality, integrity, and serving the music. He summed it up when he told me, "I look at the longevity of my career, over twenty-five years. Some drummers get burned out in the studio because they've booked themselves sessions around the clock and it's go, go, go. Then they get into that thing where they sound real burned on everything. I think you have to do what you want to do and what you think is good for you.

"I think it was great for me to go on the road with James Taylor. It added to my experiences. I did miss out on work, but they'll call again. I think the thing to remember is why you got into music in the first place—because you love it and love to play it. Once you get into that mentality of double scale and such…I don't want to become such a businessman that I forget. I have to be a businessman to a certain point, but I want to remember what's important. If you get caught up in doing every date in town, after ten years you're like a potato. You play the same stupid way you've played all along—and why? Because you were so worried about losing that double scale.

"I never thought I'd be doing record dates," Carlos insisted. "I just always loved the drums and went after it and pursued it. It's all good music. I don't want to think as a studio guy. Sometimes I play in the studio, sometimes I play live, and sometimes I play in my little room out back."

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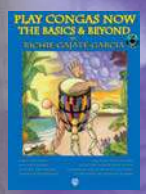

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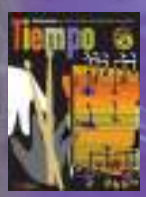

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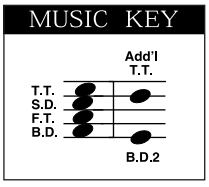
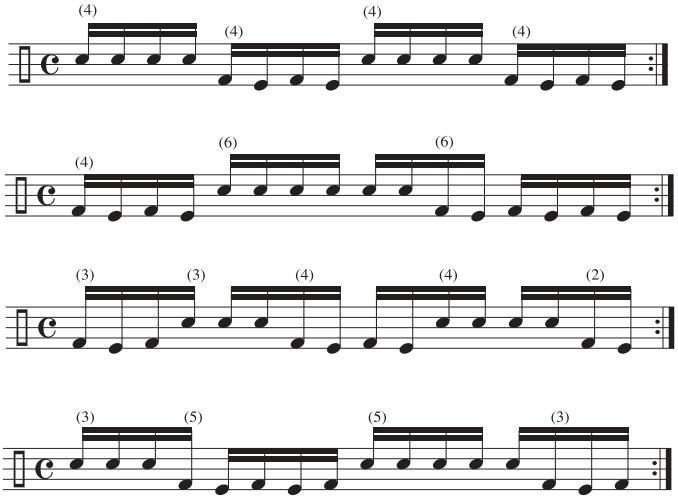
by Rory Faciane

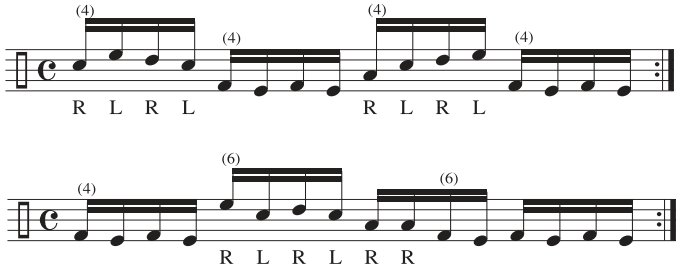


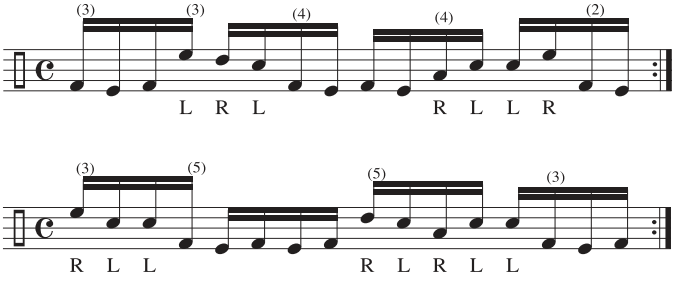
In this article we're going to focus on four basic linear double bass drum fills. All four patterns are derived from even- and odd-number groupings, which are created by simply dividing a bar of 16th notes into even and odd number groups. The stickings for these double bass patterns should be approached right to left, always starting each grouping with the right foot.

Try these four basic patterns, which are played between your hands on the snare drum and your feet either on two bass drums or on a double pedal. The numbers that appear within the examples show how many 16th notes are played. Start slowly, working on control before speed. Once you feel comfortable with the patterns, you'll be able to play them much faster.

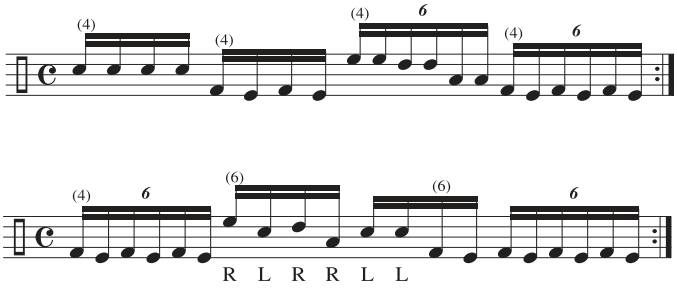


Orchestration, or moving these basic patterns around the drums, plays a very important role in developing them. Also, by experimenting with different sticking patterns with the hands, you can achieve a variety of sound possibilities.

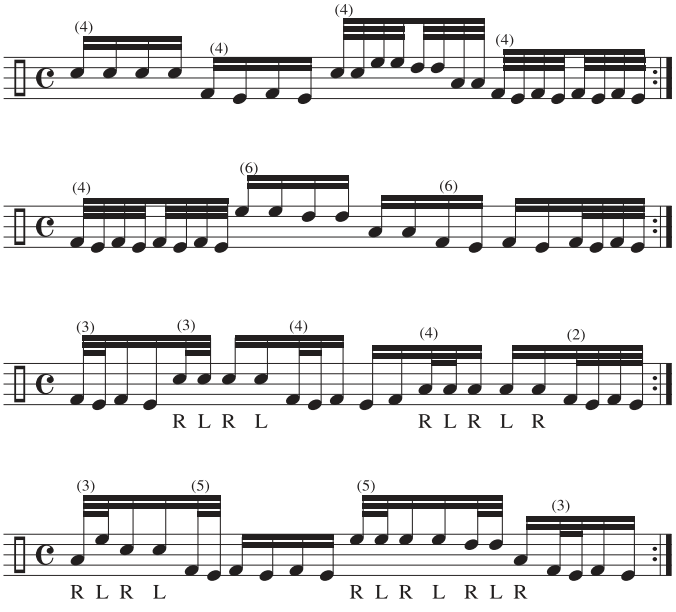




You can also replace groups of four 16th notes with one grouping of 16th-note triplets, which adds an extra twist to the patterns.



Finally, 32nd notes can be substituted for groups of two and four 16th notes. These sound very impressive when played up to speed.



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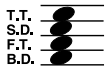
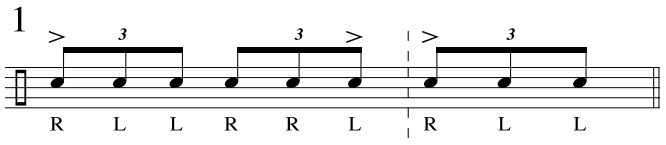


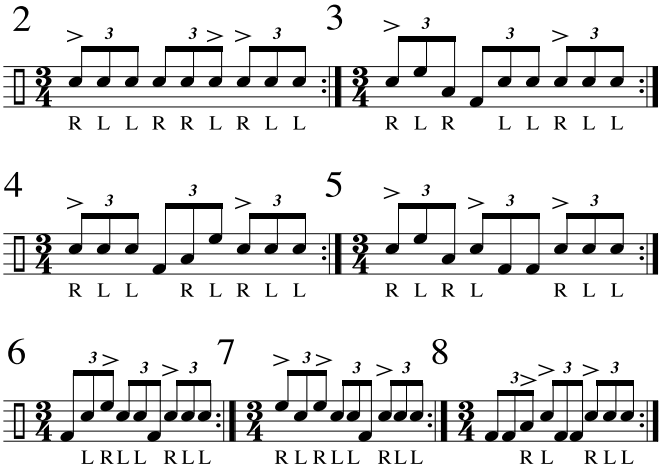
If you listen to the soloing of some of the legends of jazz drumming, like Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Roy Haynes, you'll hear ideas being phrased over the barline. In other words, they're avoiding the urge to resolve ideas on beat 1.

One of the most frequently used phrasing ideas is the three-beat motif. Phrasing in three can be an effective soloing tool, with the listener being lulled into feeling that beat 1 has moved. The ideas presented here are all three-beat, 8th-note-triplet motifs that are divided into a group of six followed by a group of three that is made up of a RLL sticking.

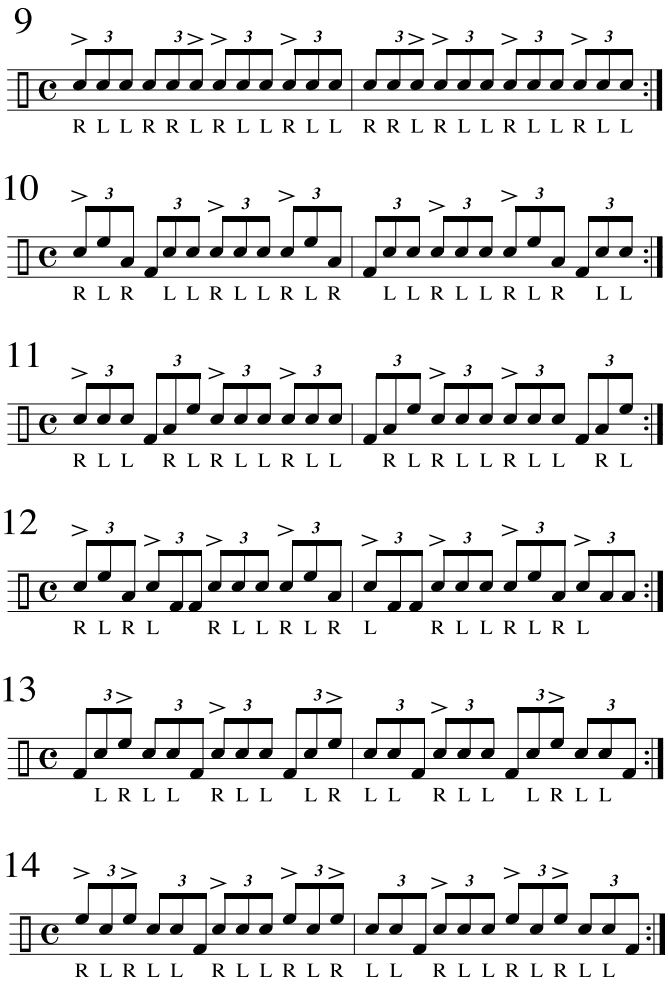


The group of six varies from one example to the next, but the RLL is added to each of them to complete the nine 8th-note triplets. When played in succession in 4/4, they move over the barline, taking three measures to resolve back to beat 1.

Examples 2–8 show the seven three-beat motifs in 3/4. These should first be practiced in 3/4, paying attention to the stickings.

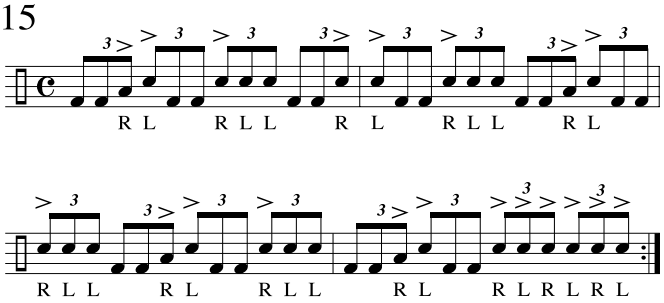


Now try the two-bar versions below.



Next try playing the motifs over four measures. Example 15 shows example 8 played in this way. As you can see, the motif resolves back onto the beat at the beginning of measure four. I've simply added some single strokes on beats 3 and 4 of measure four to finish the phrase.

15



If possible, when working on these ideas try playing the hi-hat either on beats 1 and 3 or on 2 and 4. With the hi-hat on 2 and 4, these motifs make great "fours" in a swing context. With the hi-hat on 1 and 3—splashed preferably—they make great 16th-note-triplet fills. Try playing all of them, alternating four measures of time with four measures of fill.

The accent placements in these examples are by no means the only possibilities. Be sure to try other ideas. Also, try substituting the hi-hat (played by your left foot) for the bass drum in examples 6 and 13.

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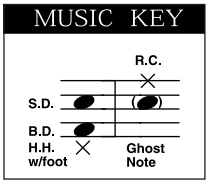
Afro-Cuban Coordination For Drumset

Songo With Right-Hand Clave

by Maria Martinez



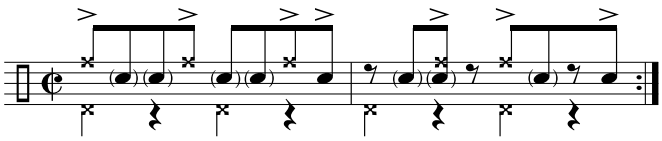
In the last installment of this series (September 2002 *MD*), we covered three different songo ostinatos to play against four different bass drum variations. In this article we'll utilize the right hand differently, having it play the various claves within the songo rhythmic style along with four different bass drum variations for you to combine with the ostinatos.

The right-hand clave patterns notated on the ride cymbal can be played on a woodblock, a jam block, a cowbell, a hi-hat, or the shell of a floor tom. This pattern is versatile in that it works well during soft or loud dynamic sections.

The ostinatos in this lesson will help coordinate the songo grooves with the right-hand clave pattern against the two-bar bass drum phrases. The ostinatos are written in 3/2 son and rumba claves, but they can also be played in 2/3 by starting on the second bar.

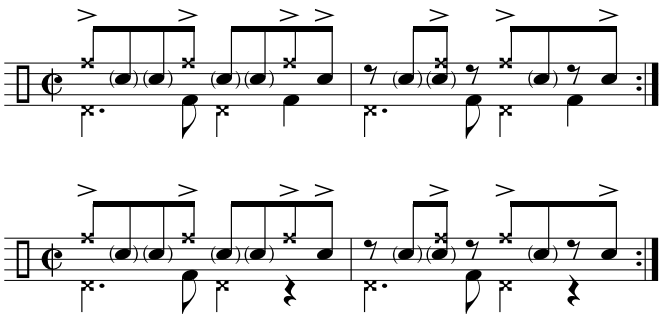
Begin by practicing the first ostinato at a slow tempo until you're comfortable playing it. To accomplish the correct feel, play the ghost notes on the snare drum as softly as possible, and accent the right-hand clave pattern. Take as much time as necessary to learn each example in this lesson.

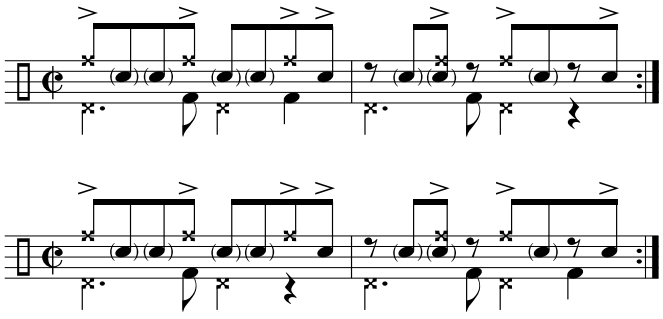
Songo Ostinato
(3/2 Son Clave)



Let's try combining the songo ostinato with a few different bass drum variations.

Bass Drum Variations

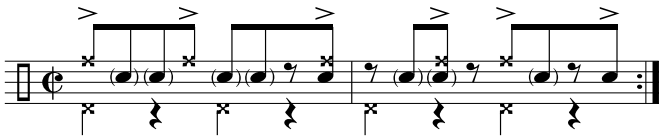




Now go back and play the previous examples in 2/3 son clave. (Again, this is accomplished by starting on the second measure.)

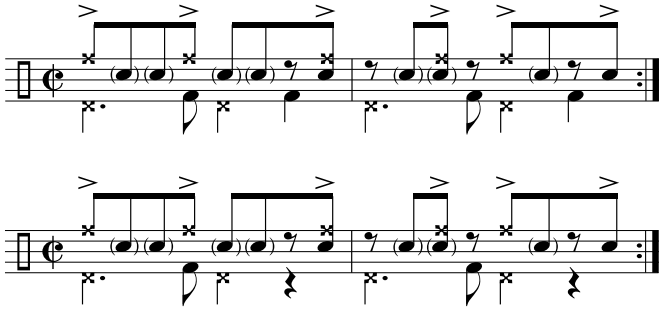
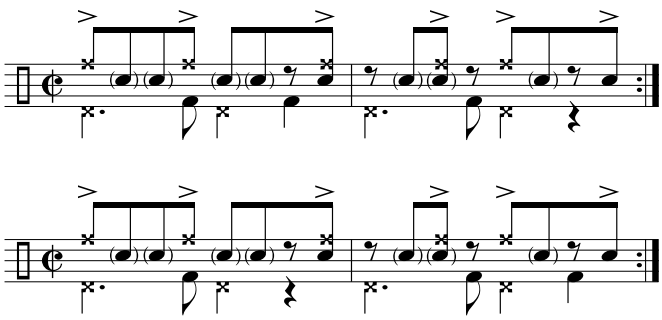
The following songo ostinatos are written in 3/2 rumba clave. Let's begin the same way, by practicing the 3/2 rumba clave songo ostinato at a slow tempo. Once you feel comfortable playing the ostinato, continue to the bass drum variations. Again, remember to play the ghost notes on the snare drum as softly as possible, and accent the right-hand clave pattern. Take as much time as necessary to learn each example.

Songo Ostinato
(3/2 Rumba Clave)



Just as before, let's try combining the different bass drum variations to the songo ostinato. Once you're comfortable playing the examples, remember to reverse the two-bar phrase so that you're playing in 2/3 rumba clave.

Bass Drum Variations



It's important to listen to and analyze the songo style. By doing this you'll realize that there are many different ways to play and interpret the songo rhythm. Some of the bands and drummers to listen to are Los Van Van, Batacumbele, Michel Camilo, Paquito D'Rivera, Ruben Blades, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Ignacio Berroa, Jose Luis "Changuito" Quintana, Robby Ameen, Alex Acuña, Jimmy Branley, Jose Martinez, and Julio Barreto.

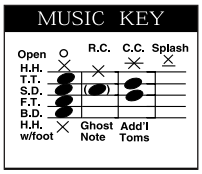
To learn more about drumset coordination in the Afro-Cuban and Brazilian styles, check out Maria Martinez's book/CD packages, Afro-Cuban Coordination For Drumset *and* Brazilian Coordination For Drumset, *published by Hal Leonard. You may also want to check out her videos,* Afro-Cuban And Brazilian Coordination For Drumset *and* The Instant Guide To Drum Grooves *(Hal Leonard).*

The Dave Matthews Band's

Carter Beauford

Busted Stuff

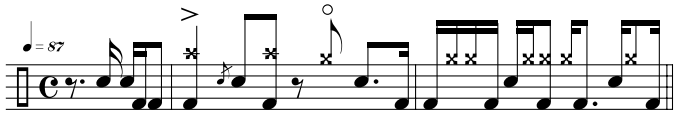
by Ed Breckenfeld



Carter's back! *Busted Stuff*, the recently released studio album by The Dave Matthews Band, is a return to form for both the band and its drummer. This one has all of the classic Beauford-isms: the relaxed yet intense fat backbeat grooves, the idiosyncratic hi-hat work, and the explosive tom fills. It's time for another schooling from one of rock's finest.

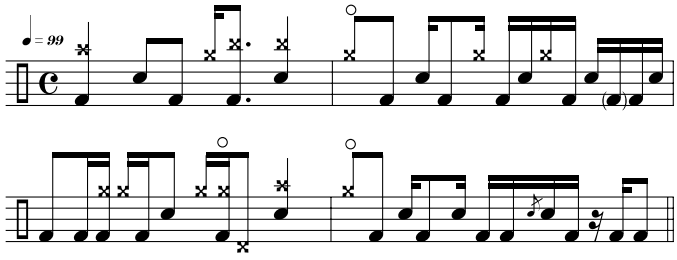
"Busted Stuff"

The opening bars of the lead track showcase a new duality in Carter's playing: sparseness in the first measure followed by a busy

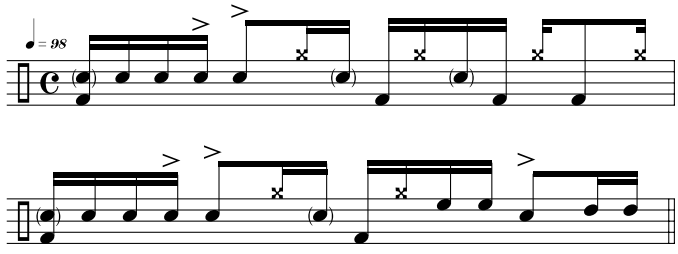


pattern in the next. The 16th notes are slightly swung in this one.

"Grey Street"



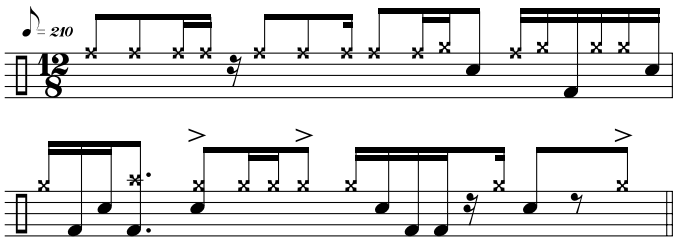
Here's a typically incredible sequence from Carter, leading into the



second verse in this song. This stuff just seems to flow out of him.

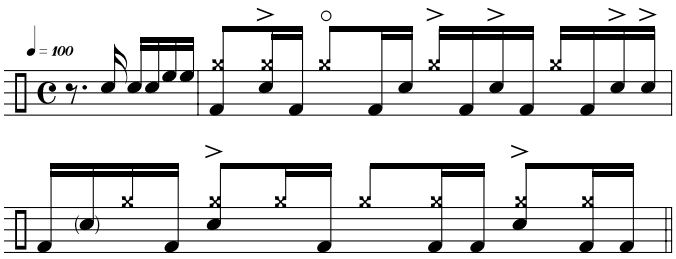
"Where Are You Going"

This nice little chorus groove works best with the left stick playing the hi-hat pattern.



"You Never Know"

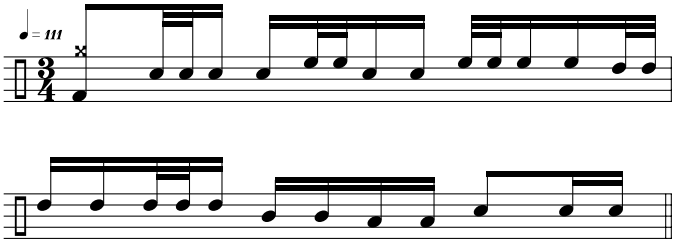
In this song, Carter plays a Cuban-style ride cymbal rhythm following the first chorus, then launches back into the verse with a syncopated fill that bypasses the downbeat of the following measure.



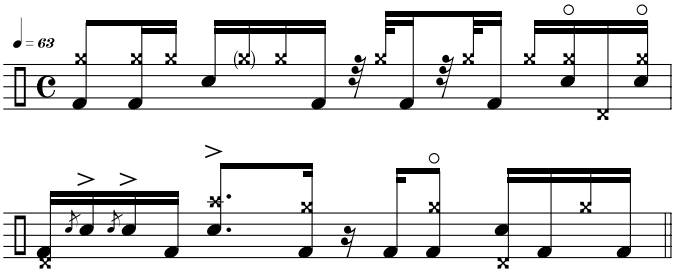
"Captain"

Here's a perfect example of Carter's penchant for turning the beat around by slipping into his linear style in the middle of an otherwise straightforward funk groove.

"Kit Kat Jam"

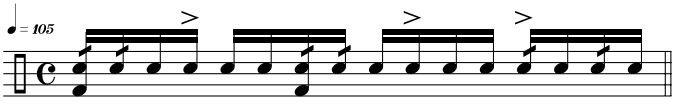


This instrumental in 3/4 time gives Carter a chance to step out with one of his favorite 32nd-note licks. For more information on this rhythm, see my article "Three And One: A Classic Fill" in the



September 2001 issue of *Modern Drummer*.

"Digging A Ditch"

Check out this head-turning sequence from the CD's slowest

track.

"Bartender"

Finally, here's a look at a marching groove from the album cl

Jim Esposito

The Clinic Trail

How To Get Started

by Joe Bergamini

One of the best things about being a drummer is the fraternity we share. From favorite gear, to cherished recordings, to the latest licks we've learned, drummers love to share information. This is probably why drum clinics and drum festivals are so popular. They provide places for us to enhance our enjoyment of the art form and to learn while doing so. Because drummers love this cross-pollination of ideas, it's no wonder so many want to be able to do clinics themselves.

A drum clinic doesn't have to be a major appearance by a superstar artist. Speaking as one who does many clinics, I can assure you that it's possible to share your passion for drums—and pass along relevant information—by doing clinics locally. Such activities will enrich the drumming community in your local area (and enhance your reputation there as well).

In 1994 I started a local school clinic program on the advice of my teacher, Dom Famularo. Since then I've done over 150 clinics, most of them in the New York metro area. In addition to making me a better performer and educator, these clinics have helped my career in many ways.

It seems that more and more drummers want to get involved with doing clinics, but they don't know where to start. Let me try to shed some light on the worthwhile and challenging pursuit of local clinics.

Clinic Structure

Local clinics can come in a variety of forms. The most common venues—retail stores and public schools—will be discussed in detail below. Other options include private schools, senior citizen centers, summer camps, day care centers, boys & girls clubs, and similar places. Each of these different audiences presents its own challenge, but all will build your ability to communicate the beauty of drumming to others. It's also possible to rent a venue, such as a local VFW hall or small theater, and stage your own clinic or local drum festival. This kind of event can be modeled after larger clinics you've attended. If you do this, you'll have to wear several hats, such as booking agent, promoter, stage manager, and production designer. The bottom line is, if you have the desire, there are many places to stage a clinic.

Start Small

If you're getting started as a clinician, you won't be performing at festivals or in retail stores across the country. You'll need to develop your skills first, and your local school system is a great place to do this. School clinics will increase your credibility as an educator, sharpen your teaching skills, improve your playing, build your teaching practice, improve your public speaking ability, and create relationships with band directors who will potentially send you students. But how do you get started?

Why Do You Want To Do Clinics?

Before getting on the phone to book your first clinic, ask yourself what you're trying to accomplish. A clinic is an educational event, and needs to be approached differently from a gig. If you're genuinely interested in sharing your knowledge and becoming a better educator, you've got the right mindset.

You'll need to speak in front of an audience during your clinic, so ask yourself if public speaking is something you enjoy. You'll need to communicate clearly with the audience and handle business matters with the sponsors and hosts of your clinics, so be aware that you'll need those skills as well.

Are you a determined person? Booking clinics can be a tedious and frustrating business involving lots of unreturned phone calls. You've got to be the kind of person who'll stick with something until he or she gets results.

Finally, be aware that clinics are *not* about constant soloing and "showing off your stuff." If you hope that doing clinics will turn the spotlight on you and your amazing licks, I urge you to consider another outlet for that desire. For advice on many of the skills I mention above, I recommend Dom Famularo's book *The Cycle Of Self-Empowerment.*

Who Would Want You To Present A Clinic?

This is a question you must ask yourself if you expect to present something worthwhile to attendees and hosts. In a public school, many students have never seen a live performance from a professional musician. The inspiration you present is valuable. You'll also be able to present drumming specifics to students that their band directors often cannot. If you make the band

If you're genuinely interested in sharing your knowledge and becoming a better educator, you've got the right mindset.

director's life easier by giving some pointers to his students that generate immediate improvement, you'll have one band director who'll be happy to tell his colleagues about you.

What Should You Talk About In A School Clinic?

If you're performing a clinic for a local retailer, your double bass foot technique, left-foot clave, and approach to post-bop jazz are all great topics. In a school clinic, they're not. Ask yourself why the band director wants you there, and try to select topics that will help the students in their band program. If you bring a drumset and perform for the students, that will be enough inspiration for them. Some band directors will ask for drumset material, others won't. Make sure you discuss this with your host. If you present a clinic at a school, be aware that band directors will expect you to be able to assist their students with marching and concert percussion.

When at a school, also be aware that you're a role model. Young students are very impressionable, and they will be looking up to you as a local pro musician. Dress well, and speak to *everyone* (students, teachers, principals) with the utmost respect and attention to your words. *Never* make physical contact with a student, even to show them something. Be careful, too, in your casual conversations with teachers, as students will always be nearby. As an educator, you have a responsibility to act professionally in schools.

How Do You Book A School Clinic?

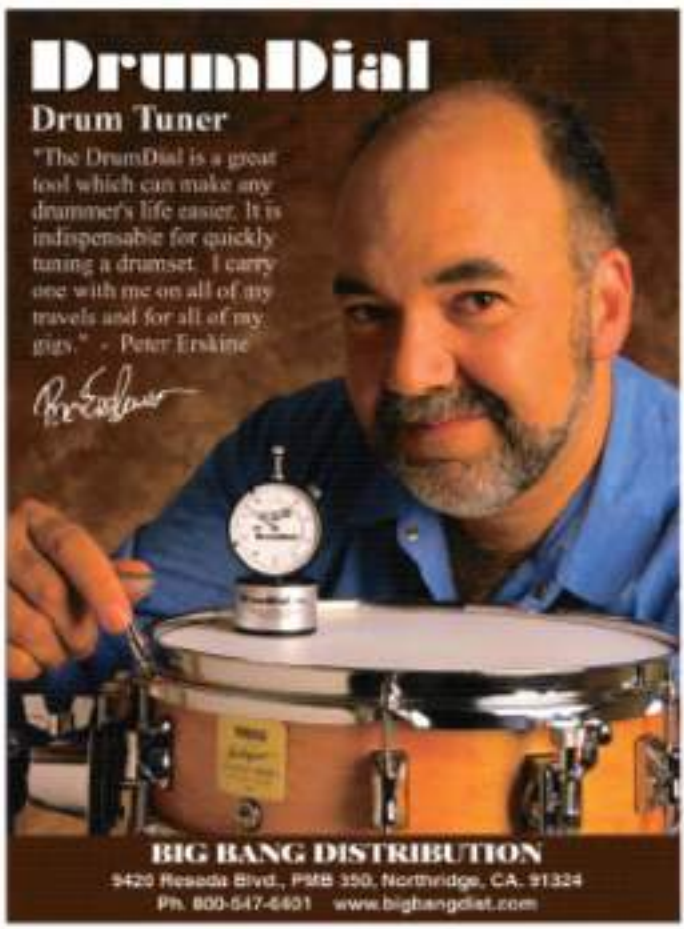
Once you know why you want to do clinics, how they will benefit a school, and what your presentation will contain, it's time to begin trying to book some clinics. Band directors are notoriously difficult to get in touch with. You'll need to develop a database of your local schools, and be prepared to be very patient as you contact the ones you want to get into. Once you've made contact, in a matter of about five minutes you must explain your clinic program and how it will benefit the teacher. This process could easily be the topic of an entire article, as could the public-speaking aspects of the clinic itself. Eventually you'll get it down, but don't be frustrated if it takes a while.

You'll also need promotional material to send to band directors. At the very least this should include a photo, a brief résumé or bio giving your drumming credentials, and an outline of what your clinic will include. Such material will help band directors to evaluate what you're offering and decide if it's appropriate for them to bring you in.

What Should You Charge?

It's my opinion that if you've never done clinics before and are calling schools to try doing some, you should not charge a fee for those clinics. I performed thirty school clinics before I felt comfortable enough with my presentation to ask for a fee. Remember that being a great player is only one part of being a great clinician.

All that being said, eventually you'll get to the point where you can charge a fee.



At that point you'll have to deal with school administration. In this situation, it sometimes speeds up the booking process if you find out who is responsible for giving the okay for outside programs in the school, and then contacting that person directly. If a school board is paying you, be prepared to submit an invoice and wait up to eight weeks to be paid. "Band booster" organizations generally can pay you on the day of the event.

Store Clinics

Probably the best option for store clinics is to start out with the store where you teach (assuming that you do). Most stores would enjoy putting on a clinic with one or more of their local teachers, since the interest generated in lessons would benefit the store.

Speaking realistically, it's hard to interest other retailers if they haven't heard your name before. If you're doing many school clinics in your local area, sometimes a local retailer will sponsor some of those clinics in exchange for "name recognition" with your audiences. But widespread store clinics usually come only after you've ascended a few more rungs on the professional ladder.

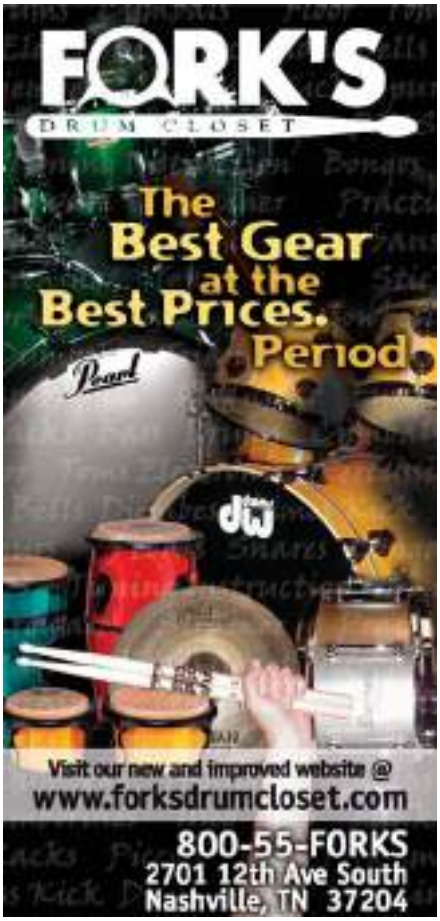
Manufacturer Support

Every day, manufacturers get calls and CDs from people who want endorsements. Don't even consider contacting manufacturers until you have a successful school clinic program already in place. If you're reaching many students—privately and in clinics—you may be able to find companies that will support you in your efforts. Be aware that this support can come in many forms, which may or may not involve an endorsement deal. If you approach companies with something truly worthwhile, they'll listen. Generally speaking, relationships with local retailers may also help this process.

There is somewhat of a misconception about endorsements in regard to booking clinics. Relationships with manufacturers can add credibility to your clinic program, but they will not change the amount of work you'll have to do on your own to continue booking and performing clinics. So you'll be better off if you keep yourself busy with school clinics, and get manufacturers to come on board later.

Performing local clinics is challenging and rewarding both for you and for your community. If you decide to pursue local clinics, you'll have some wonderful experiences. Remember: It all comes down to the effort *you* put into it. Good luck with your clinics!

Joe Bergamini's band projects include a Rush tribute act called Power Windows and an instrumental fusion group called 4Front. He has three CDs to his credit: his own Arrival *and 4Front's* Gravity *and* Radio Waves Goodbye. *Joe has performed over 150 clinics, and he recently traveled to Australia to appear at the Ultimate Drummers Weekend. He is also the author of* MD Classic Tracks *(Modern Drummer Publications) which features transcriptions and text analysis of classic recordings from important drummers.*



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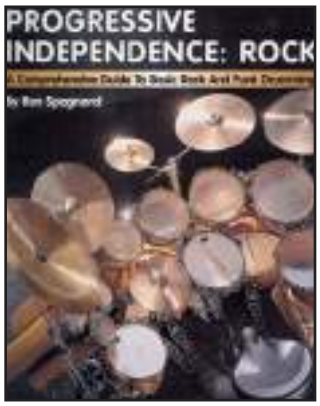
By MD Editor Ron Spagnardi



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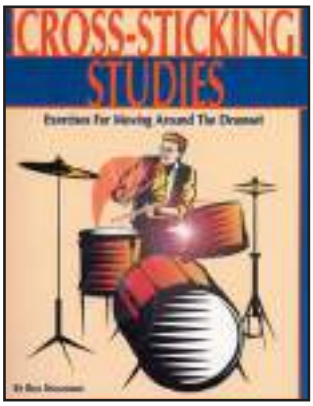

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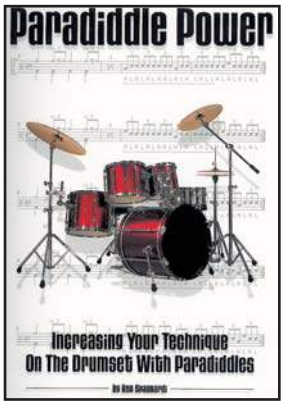

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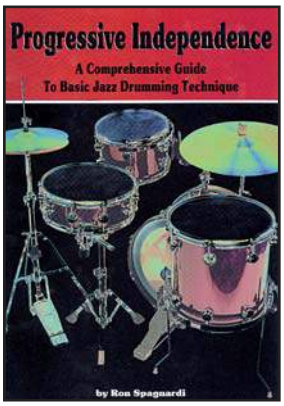

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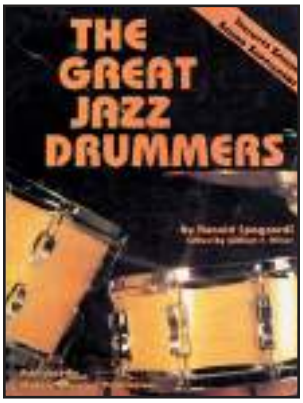

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Take A Tip

From Eddie

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— Eddie Bayers

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Ludwig Jazz Festival Snare Drum

by Harry Cangany

This month's featured drum wasn't Ludwig's top-end snare drum back in the Keystone-badge days of the mid-1960s. The more expensive Super Classic was top dog. The Jazz Festival was number two for wood-shell models. But today it has everyone looking for it.

The only differences between the two models are the strainer and the snares. Each drum has a 3-ply shell (African mahogany/poplar/mahogany) with maple reinforcing rings and eight Classic lugs. The Jazz Festival uses the simple P-83 strainer, which was the predecessor of the P-85 still in use by Ludwig today. The snares are the simple 16-strand Ludwig Snappy Snares.

What gives the Jazz Festival its collectible preeminence is not so much a matter of how nifty the drum was, but rather a matter of who played one. But before we get into that, I need to digress a bit. If you look at endorser photos from the mid-1930s through about 1960, you'll see WFL/Ludwig artists using wood-shell models. But that all changed by the early 1960s, when several key artists—notably Joe Morello—were photographed playing a Supraphonic 400 chrome snare. From that point forward, Ludwig really pushed the metal drums—largely to give their wood shop a break and keep their metal shop busy. As a result, the Supraphonic was manufactured and sold in very large quantities (as it still is today).

However, at that same point in the early '60s, a soon-to-be Ludwig endorser was playing a Premier kit and using a wood snare. When he shifted to the American manufacturer, he felt more comfortable using an eight-lug wood-shell snare drum such as he was familiar with, as opposed to the metal Supraphonic. So it was that Ringo Starr chose a Ludwig Oyster Black kit with a 20" bass drum, 12" and 14" toms, and a matching Jazz Festival snare drum.

That's one of the reasons that Jazz Festivals are so desired by collectors. The other reason is their relative rarity. Because of Ludwig's disposition toward making, advertising, and selling Supraphonics, Jazz Festivals were made in fairly small numbers—so small, in fact, that an original Oyster Black snare can go for as much as $1,500. (Recently an unplayed Oyster Black drum earned a high bid of $16,500. It didn't sell.) Any other finish will command about a quarter to a third of that amount.

A number of Jazz Festivals have shown up with the later P-85 strainers, which fit the same holes but mark the drums as not being original. My guess would be that parts robbers took off the P-83s to restore other drums. I've always preferred the all-metal look of the P-83 to the plasticized P-85. There are also a number of Jazz Festivals out there that have nickel plating on their metal fittings. That may explain where so many

chrome P-83s went: to people changing parts. (Chrome looks and wears better.)

Our featured snare is a 5x14 finished in silver sparkle. The bearing edges on this drum are rounded, giving a 1960s "woody" sound. While the drum is undated, I can tell from the clues that it was built in the 1964-65 time frame. The badge has a serial number, the interior is covered with white paint, and the muffler is the nefarious P4067 (affectionately known as the "baseball bat," due to its shape). Prior to and following the P4067, Ludwig mufflers used a round knob (P4066). If you've ever seen a "baseball bat" muffler in action, you'll know why Ludwig went back to the round version.

The Jazz Festival is a really nice drum—popular, yet hard to find. Ludwig hasn't made the model in many years. Today's wood-shell Ludwigs have ten lugs and the P-85 strainer.

For you '60s fans who can't find an Oyster Black Jazz Festival anywhere near your price range, why not consider a full set in another finish? Just make sure you top it off with a matching Jazz Festival snare, like my silver-sparkle beauty.

Make Your Old Classics Shine Like New

by Ned Ingberman

Simichrome Metal Polish

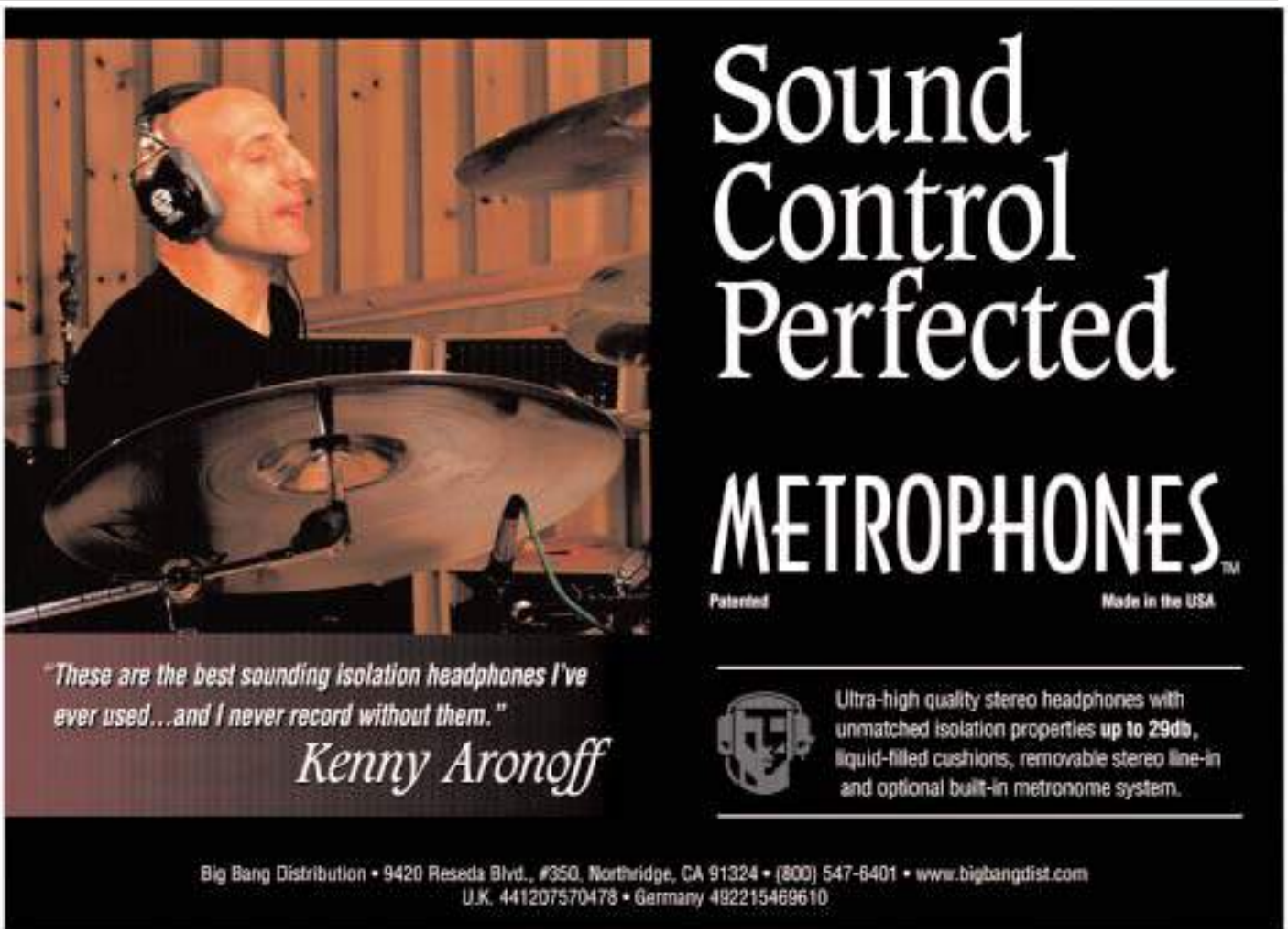
Simichrome is a very special soft paste polish made in Germany. It not only polishes metal to a brilliant luster, but leaves a protective film. It can be used on virtually any metal, including nickel, chrome, brass, copper, aluminum, steel, and silver. Although Simichrome is safe enough to polish even plexiglass without scratching, we don't recommend it for use on lacquer-finished metal drums like vintage Ludwig Black Beauties or Leedy Black Elites.

Simichrome is available in a $1\frac{1}{2}$-oz. tube for $7.35 or in an 8.8-oz. size for $22.15. It's expensive, but a little goes a long way. To find a source close to you, call Competition Chemicals at (641) 648-5121.

Prevent Finish Fade

Continued exposure to direct sunlight will, over time, discolor the plastic wrap on covered drumshells (new or vintage). If you leave your drums set up in your home, try to set them up far enough from a window so that the direct rays of the sun can't reach them. If this isn't possible, cover the kit when it's not in use. Beato makes an excellent heavy-duty dust cover with weighted corners. You can also create your own cover, using a bedsheet. A plain white sheet will reflect rather than absorb the sun's heat, making it an excellent choice.

As the owner of Vintage Drum Center (www.vintagedrum.com), Ned Ingberman has extensive experience in the repair and restoration of vintage drum equipment.



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Playing Unmiked

Part 1: I'm Hitting As Hard As I Can!

by T. Bruce Wittet

For as long as there's been a *Modern Drummer* magazine, there have been urgent letters from two groups of drummers begging for advice. Those in Group One can't play loud enough; those in Group Two play too loud. Both suffer condemnation and feelings of powerlessness. And both are playing unmiked.

In this issue, we'll look at the problems of Group One: drummers who have problems competing with their band's volume. Next issue, we'll look at Group Two: those poor souls who have the opposite problem. The words "Turn down!" are like an inescapable mantra to them.

Illustration by Joe King

I'm Playing As Loud As I Can

Perhaps you can relate to the following sample letter to *MD*: "In my band, everybody can turn up except me. I can't hear myself, and the audience can't hear me either. The clubs we play in don't have house sound systems, and our own PA won't accommodate drum mic's. What can I do to achieve better projection, using only my four limbs and two sticks?"

To answer that question, we're going to look at *acoustic* solutions. We'll talk gear, and we'll discuss basic playing concepts. Hopefully we'll help you forget about microphones for a moment and focus instead on generating a bigger, louder sound with less effort.

Sometimes No Mic's Is Better

Before we get started, let's not waste energy complaining about the absence of microphones. There are still lots of gigs in the world where drum mic's are simply inappropriate. In others, only a limited number are available—and they usually wind up being misused.

How so? Well, one invariably goes on the bass drum. Good so far. Another goes on the snare. This is not always the wisest choice, especially if the drummer is hitting properly. Then, we have the crowning error. The engineer places the third mic' over the *hi-hat*. Do you see what's happening here? The sound tech is miking the two instruments that already have a decent chance of cutting through acoustically. (Can you say, "*dumb*"?) Forget about asking to shift one of those mic's over to the ride. You'll hear this response: "No, the cymbals are going to project just fine through the vocal mic's."

If the miking equation is based on such a skewed notion of the natural balance of the drumset, you're better off unmiked. So let's get back to the job at hand: to project acoustically through the din of guitars, basses, and P.A.

What Usually Happens

Usually the vocalist asks to be turned up in the monitors. To compete with the increased stage volume coming from the wedges, the guitarist cranks up, followed by the bassist.

Your ears are awash. You *know* that your sound is not projecting and you feel compelled to do something. So you begin to hit harder. Funny, those drums don't sound any bigger. The bass drum is the first to suffer, since it works in those hard-to-hear sub-low frequencies. What to do?

Your Bass Drum As A Monitor

You must prepare your bass drum for battle. In this, there are two schools of thought. One is to open up the drum. That is, to take off the front head entirely, or maybe substitute an Evans Retro Screen (a fabric "ghost head"). You may not get increased volume, but you'll get absolute *attack*, and that's worth something. Something else you'll get is a sense of pitch that's hard to achieve with a double-headed drum. We'll talk more about this in a minute. For now, suffice it to say that keeping that pitch above basement frequencies will help.

My preference is to mount a front head with *no hole*. Those 5"-10" holes are a compromise employed by drummers who desire a semblance of double-headed sound while still accommodating a microphone. Well, we don't *have* mic's, so it's either a *big hole* (for more attack) or *no hole* (for more depth and resonance).

Now this next bit is critical. Do not use any muffling, other than the factory-fitted strips around the circumference of Remo PowerStroke, Evans EQ/EMAD, Aquarian SK, Attack, and other *batter* heads. On the front head, use a normal white or clear head, *not* a pre-muffled head such as the type often supplied with new kits. You're going to need maximum resonance from the audience side of the drum. (If you're concerned about sacrificing the drum company logo by switching the front head, contact the company for a decal.)

Realistically speaking, getting used to an unmuffled bass drum is likely to take a little while. But remember: *The absence of muffling is the key to you hearing your drum*. In effect, a wide-open bass drum provides you with a "monitor." Now that *you* can hear the drum, you won't overplay and upset the time. Similarly, the band will take notice of your new monster kick and will fall in line.

Here's a technique tip: With both heads "live," you'll have an easier time if you release the beater from the head each time you strike. This will minimize vibration

TIPS FOR PLAYING LOUDER

- Remove the front head (and any muffling) from the bass drum for more attack and penetration (or...)
- Use the front bass drum head with no hole (and again no muffling) for a bigger, boomier sound.
- Use the hardest possible felt or, better still, a plastic or wood bass drum beater.
- Use 5A or larger drumsticks.
- Always play a rimshot on the backbeat.
- Tune higher to project, as opposed to blending.
- Try double-ply heads tuned *up.*
- Choose appropriate musical "holes" for tom fills.
- Instead of hitting harder, release the stick and let the drum "breathe."

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Wanna Take You Higher

Ever wonder how the bass drums come through so well on those old Motown records, especially when we know they didn't enjoy special miking? If you listen closely, you'll notice that those bass drums were tuned *up*. They didn't wallow in the low frequencies relished by audiophiles. They stood out proudly in the mid to upper-mid ranges.

John Bonham employed the same principle with his mammoth 26" bass drum. He tuned it *a lot* higher than you'd think. When he hit it quietly, he'd get a "boing." But when he hit it hard and released the beater…well, just listen to Zeppelin's "Since I've Been Loving You."

Spare Change, Buddy?

In a loud environment in which you have neither mic's nor monitors, you need to hear the attack of your drum. If you can't, here's an old trick: Take a coin (like a US quarter) and glue it to the batter head at the point of beater impact. Cover it with a patch. (The patch should be only slightly larger than the beater, not a "muffler" for the drum.) This is guaranteed to deliver a penetrating click that you can feel, especially when you're using a hard beater. (There are also some commercial impact patches available; check with your local dealer.)

I carry a DW flat plastic beater, a Pearl beater with a choice of four surfaces, and a Yamaha beater with interchangeable beater heads. I use these to "EQ" my sound to the room, and because some are louder than others. For quieter playing, I keep soft felt and lambs wool beaters. (More about them next issue.)

Tuning Toms For Projection

Over the years, *MD* has harped on the fact that drummers tend to tune so that the drums sound good from the drum throne. Adjusting for the *audience* may demand that you make certain sacrifices. These are the same sacrifices you make to transcend unfavorable club acoustics. Forget dream drum sounds. This is a matter of survival.

To begin with, what applies to the bass drum also applies to toms: *Always tune higher than you would normally*. Squishy heads produce deliciously low frequencies that rarely make it past the edge of the stage. If you generally tune your toms low, take them up at least a half-turn with the tuning key. The heads will feel a little harder and less "organic." But within that raucous swell of group volume, you will now hear your drums—and so will your audience.

Forget dream drum sounds.
This is a matter of survival.

I strongly recommend that you tune the bottom head higher than the top. You'll get instant "combustion" inside the drum, and you'll retain some semblance of a comfortable feel on the batter. What's more, your drum will speak with a clearer pitch over a greater distance. How high is "higher" when referring to the bottom? At least a perfect third in a scale ("Row, row, *row* your *boat*"). I quizzed Peter Gabriel drummer Manu Katché on this point, and

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he admitted that sometimes he'll go for a more extreme interval.

You need to become a "psycho-acoustician." Imagine a desirable sound, then tune *above* that sound to "protect" it on its journey. You can verify your success in this by having someone play your drums while you listen at a distance during soundcheck.

If you simply can't live without low-pitched toms, here's a playing tip: *Choose your spots.* Find those spaces in the music devoid of other instruments, and fill in those "holes" with your toms. But remember to be tasteful. Don't play *all* of the holes.

Use Your Head

We read of stadium drummers who fit their toms with single-ply heads. That's all well and good for *them*. They're miked, and their drum tech likely changes those heads every show or two. I'd recommend that *you* use double-ply heads, for several reasons. The first is durability. Double-ply heads will serve you longer before pitting and tearing. This is important, since it's going to be difficult to get *any* sort of sound with a damaged head.

Then there's tone. A double-ply head from any manufacturer has an inherently "thick" sound that's rich in mids and low frequencies. If you whack such a head, you retain some of those qualities. On the other hand, if you hit a single-ply head hard, the membrane goes into distortion. I've been using coated double-ply heads since the early 1970s. When I tune these heads up, they sound less "boingy" than single-ply heads. I get plenty of attack (courtesy of the coating) along with a meaty sound that seems to travel well.

With all this talk of coating, I should explain that many drummers prefer clear double-ply heads. Clear heads sacrifice a little attack, but deliver increased sustain (read: a "wetter" drum sound). It's an attractive sound and certainly not a bad thing when you're trying to be heard.

Here's the clincher. In the course of researching an article for *MD*, I discovered that the great Tony Williams used double-ply heads, too. When he hit hard—and he could hit *very* hard—he didn't want a tom "disappearing" on him. During that whole late-'60s Miles Davis period on into fusion, when Tony wasn't using his familiar black dot heads (rumored also to be custom double-ply jobs!), he was using coated (double-ply) Emperors.

We've been talking mainly toms until now. On the snare, if you're hitting proper rimshots (see below), single-ply heads theoretically should do the job. Here again, though, double-ply heads will make life easier. That rimshot will be more robust and will have more sustain. There's nothing more disappointing than slamming a rimshot that wimps out.

Some loud players choose Kevlar heads for their snare drums. My feeling is that such heads sacrifice the sort of raucous ring I need from a snare drum. On the other hand, they are incredibly durable. If you're breaking heads frequently, you might need the extra insurance that these heads provide. But first, let's examine your greatest weapon: the rimshot.

You Gotta Hit Rimshots

Let me state it clearly: If you want a backbeat that projects (one of those snare sounds that people talk about in *Modern*

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Drummer), you have to learn the art of the rimshot.

Playing rimshots is not just arbitrarily catching the rim and head simultaneously. You must "train" your rimshot. Take a pencil and mark the "sweet spot" on the batter head with an X. Then play backbeats for as long as it takes, hitting the rim and the X each time until you have erased the pencil mark. Do *not* squeeze the thumb and first finger too tightly, or the rimshot will sound choked (and you may be injured).

Veteran players like Carmine Appice, Ginger Baker, and Bill Bruford report hitting *toms* with rimshots in the name of projection. To get a rimshot on a tom sounding good, you must, again, tension the tom reasonably tightly.

Cymbals

Older jazzers will tell you, "Every cymbal should be a ride." For our purposes, the converse is true: Every ride should be a crash. If you're about to choose a new ride, you'll want a thick/heavy cymbal capable of projecting a clear ping, backed by enough wash to provide body. And you'll also want it to erupt in a mighty crash. In a pinch, you'll need it!

Many drummers mount their rides low and parallel to the ground. Without getting into the tyranny of fashion, let's just say that you ought to be able to ride *and* crash the thing. Think of the future, while you're at it. If you place your ride too low, when you *do* get into a blessed miking situation, it's going to bleed into your floor tom mic' and cause all sorts of problems.

When the amps are blaring, I guarantee your 16" paper-thin crash will disappear into the wash. You'll hit it harder to hear it, and (worst-case scenario) it's going to shatter. All of the major cymbal companies offer rock crashes (and rides). These cymbals feature designs that incorporate weight, bell size, profile, taper, and the desired higher pitch that will penetrate. Low-pitched, thin cymbals (rides *or* crashes) are not much use in high-volume situations. They're the ones that'll crack first.

Maybe you can't afford a new set of cymbals. But if you already own, say, a 16", an 18", and a 20" crash, you're in business. Omit the 16" or shift it off to the side to be used as a high-volume "splash." Place the 18" and 20" crashes where you can reach them comfortably. The late Jeff Porcaro had no use for small-diameter crashes. He'd enthuse about the way large-diameter crashes generated a big decay that would stretch across bar lines (or, in your case, project *to* the bar at the back).

Stick It In Your Ear

When things get loud and you feel you're not projecting, earplugs can reduce annoying wash and restore a natural stage balance. (*MD*'s Rick Van Horn calls this "reducing the din factor.") Once you get out from under the sheer onslaught of competing sound, you may find that you're projecting more than you think. And you'll be protecting your hearing for that grand day when you'll have six mic's and a separate monitor mix.

Next issue we'll address the problems of drummers who play too loud. See you then!

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The Value Of A Teacher

by Tom Van Schaik

Being a musician, you're automatically thrust into the role of perpetual student. There's always something else to learn or a new skill to master. As the saying goes, "If you're not improving as a player, you're moving backward." Hand in hand with this concept is the ongoing debate about the need for a drummer to study formally with a teacher. Proponents of self-taught drummers feel that a teacher will stifle their creativity and make them a clone of the teacher. They also point to the successes of a few "famous" self-taught drummers, citing the "if he can do it, so can I" theory.

The other side of the argument holds that a good teacher can guide a student in the right direction, so that the student can better him or herself far beyond the student's own expectations. A good teacher provides a fresh slant, a different view, more knowledge, and a structured approach to learning that a student cannot achieve alone.

Do You Need A Teacher?

The decision to study with a teacher is totally an individual one. But ask yourself these questions: Are you stuck in a rut? Do you need inspiration or to be exposed to a new direction or style? Have you hit a "technical wall" in your playing that you can't get past? Do you need to improve your technical and reading skills to make yourself marketable for freelance and studio work? Are you not the most self-motivated person? If the answer to these questions is "yes," a good teacher may be right for you.

A good teacher provides a fresh slant, a different view, more knowledge, and a structured approach to learning that a student cannot achieve alone.

The music business is tough. Unless you are incredibly lucky to be in a band that is fortunate enough to get a record deal *and* a few #1 records *and* a few successful tours, *and* you invest your money well, you'll need a lot more than luck in your corner in order to survive. The ability to read is paramount in today's music world. I always equate the need to read music to the need to read the English language. Without this skill, you're limiting yourself, not only in your ability to earn a living, but in your capacity to learn. It is possible for you to teach yourself to read, but it's much easier and quicker to have someone who is a skilled reader explain the theory to you. If students have a problem with their studies in school, to whom should they go for help? *The teacher*. Why? Because the teacher has the knowledge and experience to break down the complex problem to a point simple enough for the students to fully comprehend.

It has always been my contention that you can never have too much information or be exposed to too many new and different ideas—even if they are contrary to your own. New, possibly differing ideas expand your field of knowledge and level of experience. A teacher can expose you to an entire world outside of the one you're currently in. A teacher can adjust your technique and get you playing far beyond what you thought imaginable. A good teacher will be able to hear and see things you might never detect, and then help you to correct the problem, thus avoiding troubles down the road.

Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, and Neil Peart enlisted the talents of legendary teacher Freddie Gruber to help them reach their goals, benefiting from insight that they could not acquire on their own. Tiger Woods is known to fly his swing coach (Butch Harmon) to a tournament to help fix something that Tiger can't figure out on his own. Recording artists regularly work

with a producer in the studio. The producer is there to oversee and creatively direct the recording session in order to bring the project to the point where both he and the artist are satisfied. How is this different from a teacher working with a student?

We all have the ability to teach ourselves any skill. But the process will be easier, quicker, and more complete with the assistance of someone who already knows the material. A good teacher can help you be the best player you can be, but only with your own hard work. (Remember that teachers are guides, not magicians.) Some students want the results without the work. They end up blaming the teacher for their lack of progress, when the blame should fall on their own lack of initiative. A teacher may have the key to unlock all the potential that is inside of you.

Finding The Right Teacher

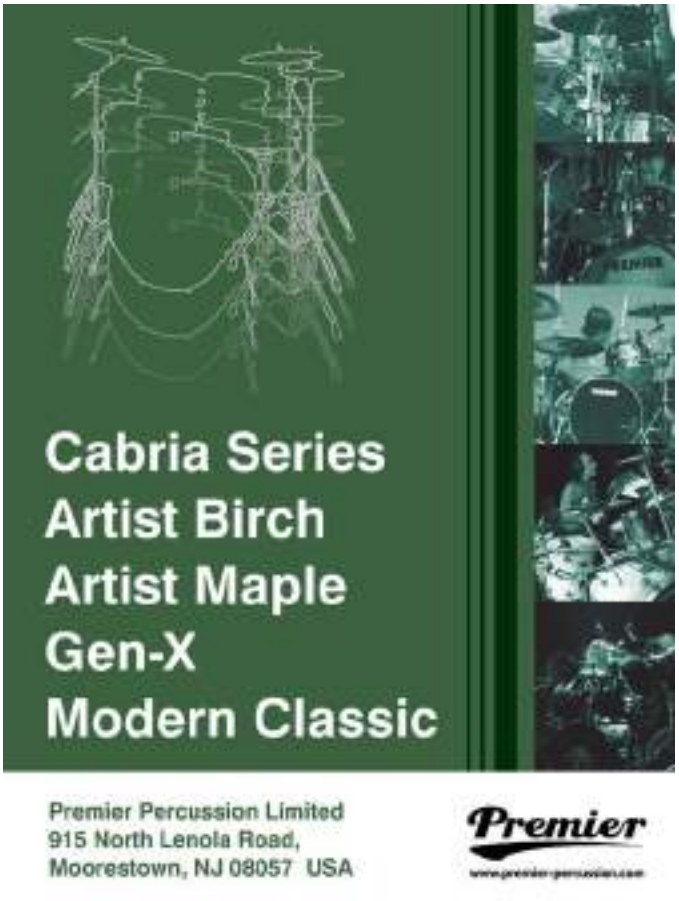
Once you've made the decision to work with a teacher, the next step involves finding the right teacher for you. Buddy Rich once stated that a good drummer could make a bad band sound great, while a bad drummer could ruin a great band. This scenario also relates to teachers. A good teacher can inspire and guide you to a level of playing that you never knew you were capable of achieving. A bad teacher can leave you frustrated and discouraged.

The best ways to find teachers in your area is by word of mouth. Get referrals from friends, other drummers at your school, or other players in your area. If you meet another drummer at a concert, clinic, or club, ask who he or she has studied with. Ask the band directors at local high schools and colleges for names of their private instructors. These teachers are usually college-trained educators and professional players in their own right. They usually have had to interview or audition for the band directors, who carefully check their credentials.

Also, check area music stores for teachers or referrals. But be careful here. Many music stores don't have the stringent hiring standards that most schools do. They tend to just rent out studio spaces to the teachers or have a bulletin board full of drummers offering lessons.

As a student, there are a few things you must do before your first lesson. First of all, figure out exactly what you want to get out of the lessons. Do you want to improve your reading…fine-tune your technique…learn new musical styles…improve your four-way independence…expand yourself and learn marimba or timpani? You must go into the lessons with specific goals. Otherwise you'll become frustrated very quickly, because you'll feel as though you're not moving in a definite direction. Approach your lessons with an open mind and a positive attitude.

When you have found a prospective teacher, it's a good idea to check out his or her background. First, ask for any credentials. These would include the teacher's schooling, years of teaching experience, and professional playing experience. Some students find the hottest drummer in the area and inquire about lessons. Many times this is successful. However, someone can be a great player but not a great teacher. Teaching requires the ability to convey sometimes very complex ideas in a way that is easy to comprehend. Ask the teacher



if you might be able to talk to some of his or her other students. Such input can be very helpful in making your decision.

At the first lesson, talk to the teacher about your specific goals. Many teachers find it refreshing to have a "proactive" student, rather than one who shows up and just says, "Teach me something." This is also a good time to make sure your personalities fit. It's very important to develop a feeling of trust, confidence, and faith between student and teacher. If you feel intimidated or uneasy going to your lessons, the teacher is probably not right for you. Trust your instincts. If it doesn't feel right…move on. Feeling comfortable with your teacher will increase the productivity of your studies.

There are certain qualities that you should look for in your teacher. For example, a teacher should be showing you things, not "showing off." If the teacher spends a majority of the lesson playing, he or she is usually wasting your time. A teacher should not have a "look what I can do" attitude. A teacher can only analyze a student's playing if the student is *doing* the playing.

A good teacher usually avoids saying, "This is the only way…" or "You must do it this way…." I always convey to my students that there is never only one way of doing something. What I teach is simply what has worked for me. A teacher should have enough knowledge of different grips and techniques to be flexible and work with you. A teacher should be able to communicate ideas clearly and demonstrate them effectively. A teacher should be able to challenge you without being overwhelming. The teacher should be able to recognize your strengths and weaknesses, in order to offer exercises to develop your weaknesses into strengths.

Your teacher should have a positive attitude and a professional appearance. If he appears disheveled and his studio is a mess, or if he ends up canceling more lessons than he teaches, he is either burned out or just teaching for some extra cash. Either way, this teacher is likely not the best choice for you.

This brings us to the point that "you get what you pay for." An experienced teacher will usually charge you more than someone whose paper tab you ripped off the sign at the music store. However, you will be paying for his years of teaching experience and all that that entails. More often than not, though, you'll be more satisfied with your teacher and will have more positive results from your studies.

Finding the right teacher may take some time and effort on your part. But the results are well worth the effort. You'll know when you've found the right teacher, because you'll see improvement in your playing, you'll be inspired to learn more, and the lessons will be *fun*. Good luck on your search!

Tom Van Schaik is a successful touring and session drummer who's played with Robert Earl Keen, The Dixie Chicks, Larry Coryell, Charlie Pride, and Lyle Lovett. He holds a B.M. from The University Of North Texas, and has taught privately, at Novarro College, and at the Arts Magnet High School in Dallas. In addition, he is an active clinician for Sabian, Pro-Mark, Mapex, and Aquarian.

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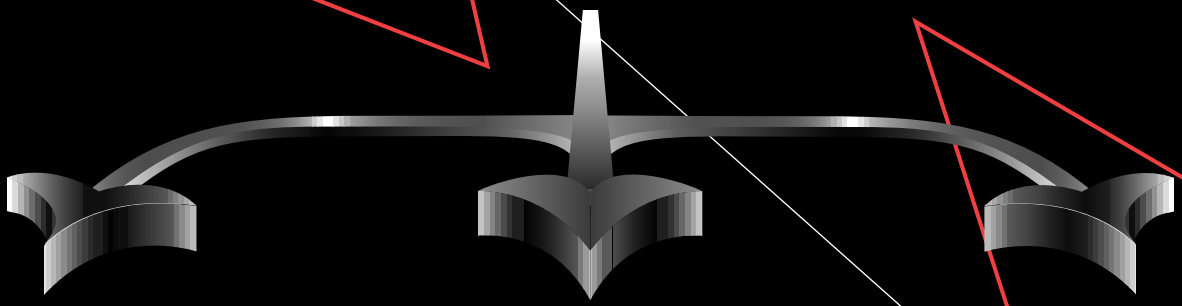

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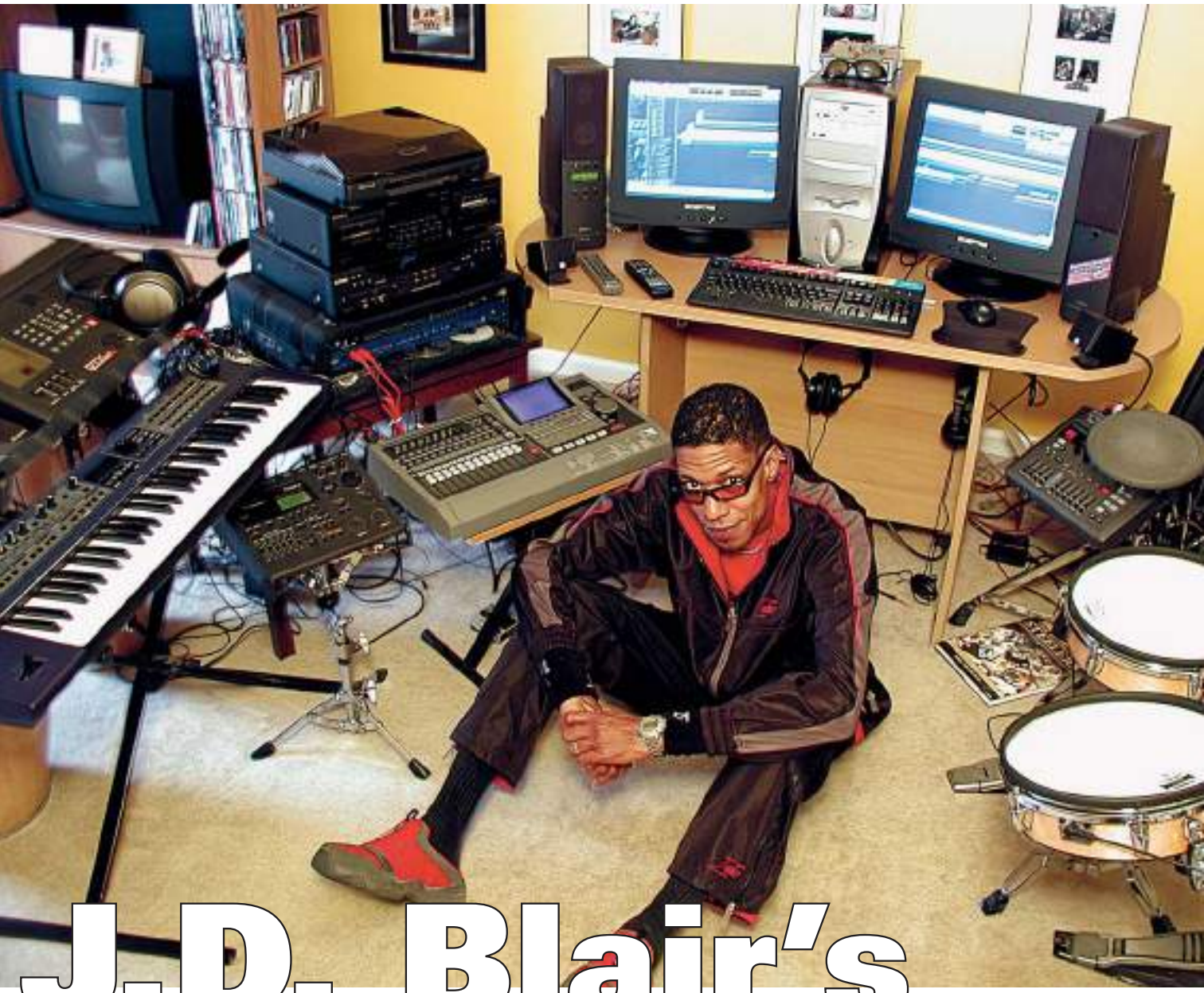


J.D. Blair's Music City Music

Story by Robin Tolleson
Photos by Rick Malkin

When he moved with his family into a two-story house in Nashville, Tennessee three years ago, J.D. Blair hoped to find a place where he could practice and work on his own music when not touring with Shania Twain, Victor Wooten, or Point Of Grace. Mrs. Blair proposed he take the room over the garage. "It's what we call the bonus room," J.D. says. "It kind of goes over the kitchen, and is a little wider than the garage. The upstairs is my own private getaway. It's not elaborate, but it's nice."

J.D. says he heads upstairs at all hours of the day and night. "I go up whenever I feel like it. These last couple nights I've been up till about 4:00 in the morning recording stuff and tweaking previous tracks. Sometimes I tell myself to try to wrap it up around midnight. But as you know, you can't stop that creative flow. I just go until I can't keep my eyes open anymore.

"I cut on the machines," J.D. goes on, "pray that they work, and hopefully have what I would call a good session, however long it is. Granted, sometimes I might stay in there only fifteen minutes and lay down an idea. But as long as the gear works and there's no buzzing or locking up of the hard drive, I'm happy."

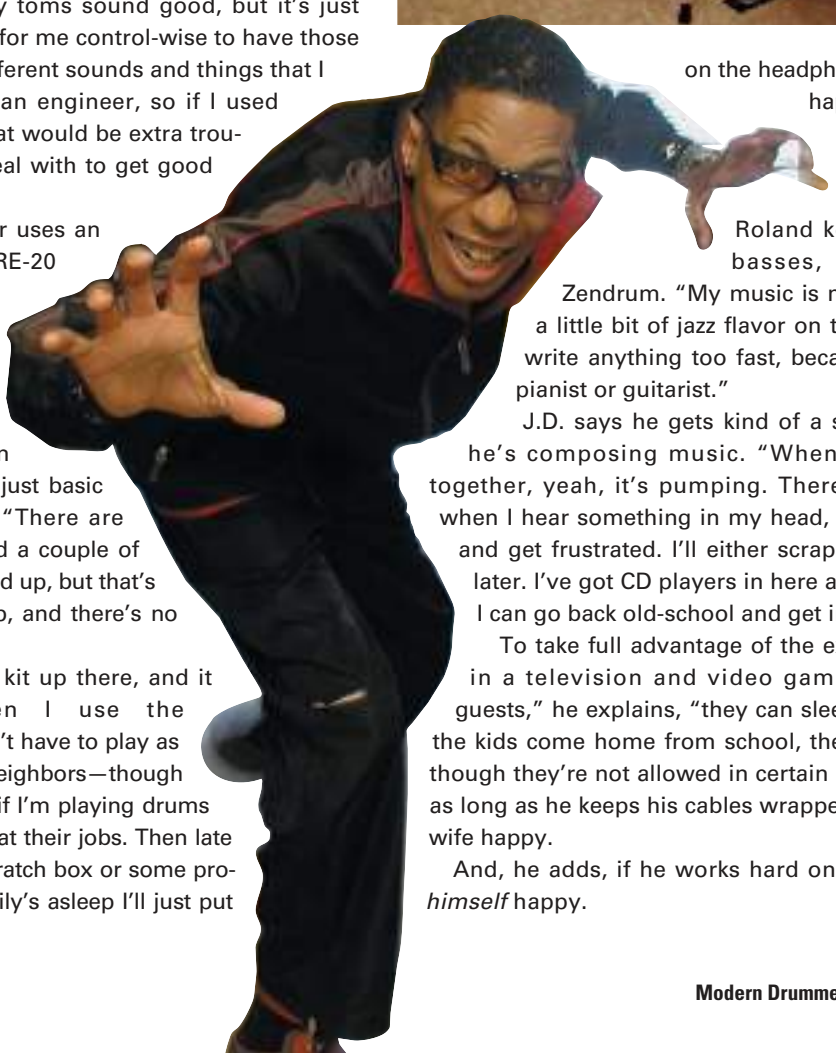
Blair uses a Roland 1680 16-track hard-drive recorder, with E-Magic software. "I'm not a tech head, but this setup sounds

good to me," he insists. "I haven't felt the need to upgrade. It's digital happyland, real user-friendly."

J.D. sometimes uses a combination acoustic/electronic drum setup. "Usually I'll keep the bass drum and snare drum acoustic (Yamaha 18" kick drum, 12" snare), and I'll trigger on top. The Yamaha DTXTREME pads give me melodic sounds, loops, and voices too. And—I'm not going to lie to you—my toms sound good, but it's just more convenient for me control-wise to have those pads, with the different sounds and things that I can get. I'm not an engineer, so if I used acoustic toms, that would be extra trouble I'd have to deal with to get good sounds."

To record, Blair uses an Audio Technica RE-20 mic' on the kick and a Shure SM57 on the snare. Lucky for him, he hasn't had the need to install any soundproofing in the walls or ceiling. "They're just basic white walls," J.D. explains. "There are some plaques on the wall and a couple of jazz pictures that my wife picked up, but that's about it. The ceiling arches up, and there's no soundproofing on that either.

"I've recorded an acoustic kit up there, and it sounds good. But when I use the electronic/acoustic setup, I don't have to play as hard, which is better for the neighbors—though nobody has complained. And if I'm playing drums it's usually while folks are out at their jobs. Then late at night I'll maybe do some scratch box or some programming. And when the family's asleep I'll just put on the headphones, and everybody's happy."



Blair's music-room setup is rounded out by a Roland keyboard, a couple of basses, a guitar, and a Zendrum. "My music is mostly funk stuff, with a little bit of jazz flavor on top," he says. "I don't write anything too fast, because I'm not a master pianist or guitarist."

J.D. says he gets kind of a spiritual feeling when he's composing music. "When the track's coming together, yeah, it's pumping. There are very few times when I hear something in my head, can't make it happen, and get frustrated. I'll either scrap it or come back to it later. I've got CD players in here and a record player, so I can go back old-school and get inspired."

To take full advantage of the extra space, Blair's put in a television and video games. "When we have guests," he explains, "they can sleep in there. And when the kids come home from school, they can play in there—though they're not allowed in certain areas." J.D. jokes that as long as he keeps his cables wrapped neatly, he keeps his wife happy.

And, he adds, if he works hard on his music, he makes *himself* happy.

ddrum4 SE Signature Edition Electronic Drumkit

The Sounds Of The Greats...And Some Great Features, Too!

by Rick Long

Amid all the hoopla (and the fine products) generated by the major Japanese electronic-percussion manufacturers, it should be remembered that the Swedish-made ddrum line is one of the most venerable in the field. Their digitally recorded drum sounds and drummer-friendly modules have been around since the late '80s. And they've been the choice of many top pros throughout that time.

The ddrum4 SE is the latest drumkit incarnation from ddrum. The "SE" stands for Signature Edition, reflecting the fact that the sounds in this kit were recorded by Kenny Aronoff, Dennis Chambers, Simon Phillips, and Mel Gaynor, with each drummer playing his own kit. If you've ever wanted your drums and cymbals to sound like those played by any of these fine musicians, this is your chance.

The review kit includes four Cast

Precision Mesh-Head Pads (one dual-zone snare pad with head and rim triggers, and three single-zone tom pads), two dual-zone Cast cymbals, a Cast Hi-Hat pad, a kick pad (similar in construction to the tom pads except that it has a built-in stand), the ddrum4 SE sound module, and a rack with two cymbal stands. A third cymbal pad can be added for just under $300, but you'll also need to budget for another stand. Let's look at each individual component.

Snare Pad

The snare version of the Cast Precision Mesh Head Pad has a 12"-diameter cast-aluminum base. The rim attaches to the base with traditional tension rods, but those rods fit into removable steel inserts in the base rather than into lug casings. The rim has a highly polished chrome finish, even though most of it is covered with a rubber edge. Overall, the assembly has the feel of a solidly built device.

The mesh head is sturdy and provides excellent stick rebound once it's tightened up. (Most electronic pads with mesh heads are shipped with the heads slack to prevent stretching prior to purchase.) The rubber covering over the rim is at a good angle for rimshots, and the rubber helps lower impact stress on the hands and wrists.

This is a comfortable pad to play hard on, yet it has no problem tracking soft rolls and ghost notes. The pad's electronic sensor is underneath a red tab near the rim. It's out of the way, but you might want to be careful if you tend to be a bit wild with the sticks.

One limitation of the mesh-head version of the Cast Precision Pad is that it doesn't track stick position or pressure. However, ddrum offers a pad with Mylar heads and a center-mounted trigger that will sense both of these parameters. The choice is up to you.

Tom Pads

The 10"-diameter Cast Precision tom pads have the same triggering mechanism, along with the same high-quality fit and finish, as the snare pad does. Even the rubber edging on the rim is included, despite the fact that the pads are not dual-zone. They also feel equally comfortable to play on.

Cymbal Pads

Ddrum has not made an attempt to simulate "real" cymbals with their Cast Cymbal pads. Instead, the pads are red disks with a black rubber surface on the top. Cymbal springs have been included so that the pads have some sway when you play them. This makes them feel a *bit* more like acoustic cymbals, but the main advantage is that the rubber makes things easier on your upper-extremity joints and muscles.

The pads are dual-zone, with the edge triggering one sound and the center another. The ride cymbal is programmed from the factory so that the outer area of the pad is a ride bow sound and the center has the bell sound. The cymbals can be choked by grabbing the rim after a crash, much as you would do with an acoustic cymbal.

You might suspect that playing the bell sound would feel "unnatural," since the pad doesn't have a raised center like an acoustic cymbal. I found that if I played the ride area of the pad with the tip of the stick, and then used the shoulder of the stick to hit the center of the pad, I got the proper sound from the pad and a close enough feel to that of an acoustic cymbal that I had no reason to complain. My only suggestion to you would be to buy another cymbal pad right away and connect it to the percussion input on the sound module. The percussion input is easily programmable so that it can become a second crash cymbal.

Hi-Hat

The ddrum4 SE hi-hat has a unique mechanism that makes it feel the most like an acoustic hi-hat of any available electronic hi-hat device. This is largely because the controller pad attaches to a regular acoustic hi-hat stand (that you provide). The pad attaches to the main pole and remains in a fixed position. Then a small device that looks like an overgrown thimble (ddrum calls it the hi-hat clutch) goes onto the hi-hat pull rod. When this "clutch" moves up and down with the connecting rod, its magnetic bottom interacts with the mounted controller pad, which sends signals to the sound module. Those signals track your foot movements and thus produce hi-hat sounds that range smoothly from tightly closed to fully open.

Using a traditional hi-hat stand makes the hi-hat pad easy to position and keeps the pedal more stable than most e-hi-hat pedals are. You'll need to follow the easy instructions in the manual about how to calibrate this pad with the sound module the first time you set up the hi-hat.

Making The Connections

Instead of the low-cost $^1/_4$" phone jacks and plugs used by everyone else in the

electronic drum business, ddrum chooses to use more expensive XLR (microphone type) jacks and plugs on their pads. These have a locking mechanism that will prevent accidental dislodging of the cord while you're playing. (You might not think this happens often, but if you crash an electronic cymbal and it swings much at all, that $^1/_4$" phone plug can come flying out of its jack.) The XLR connector is used on the pad end of all the cords, while a $^1/_4$" phone plug is used on the more stationary module end. The hi-hat cord has a stereo $^1/_4$" phone plug on the module side, so you need to be careful not to use that cord for other pads. These are heavy-duty cords that should hold up well.

Support Structure

The ddrum rack is sturdy and simple to set up. It has two main legs that double as telescoping cymbal stands. These are connected by a curved pole that holds two rack toms. A right-side rack arm holds the "floor" tom and sound module. All the rack parts are lightweight yet heavy-duty.

Racks can be tricky to set up the first time. But this one went up quickly. You'll save some time by positioning the cymbals first, since the cymbal stands are part of the two main rack legs. Once the cymbals are in position, you can position the toms accordingly.

To mount the snare drum pad, you can use a traditional snare stand or a rack-mounting system. That system uses a rack arm and clamp, along with a snare basket mounted on a short pole that can be adjusted to contact the floor. Rack mounting ensures that the snare drum will always be in the same place whenever you transport the kit to rehearsals or gigs. (Keep in mind that you'll need to tighten the clamps very tightly to keep the snare pole from slipping.) Mounting the snare on a traditional stand, on the other hand, makes positioning the snare much quicker and more flexible. Since both ways have their advantages and disadvantages, the kit can be ordered with either the rack-mounted snare basket or with a separate sturdy, double-braced stand.

The ddrum Brain

Two complaints that I often hear about electronic drums in general are that some sound modules have a steep learning curve, and the manuals are poorly written. The ddrum4 SE module is easy to understand and operate, and the manual is simple to understand.

Most of the frequently used parameters—things that you might want to tweak often—are designed into knobs on the face of the module. This makes it easy to play the drum with one hand and twist the knob to tweak the settings with the other.

The manual has straightforward explanations of each parameter. These could easily be understood by young players, yet they still provide info needed by pro-level players, such as MIDI mapping, a complete listing of the sound library, and discussions on how best to use the sound module with acoustic triggers. Extra single-page copies of key instructions are provided so that you can have them handy while setting up the rack for the first time or installing the Version 1.5 EPROM (erasable programmable read-only memory) that comes with the sound module.

The Digital Age

That EPROM, by the way, is the most significant difference between the ddrum4 SE sound module and every other drum module currently available. It allows you to easily manipulate the module's memory chips to delete or add sounds as you see fit. In fact, sounds can be deleted right from the controls on the top of the module.

To add sounds, you'll need to connect the module to your computer through MIDI ports. Even if you've never used

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MIDI before, this is not a difficult process. Check to see if your computer already has MIDI ports. Most recent computers with a SoundBlaster-type sound card will have these ports right on the front of the computer or in plain sight on the back. If you don't already have MIDI ports, an adapter cord can be attached to the joystick port on any sound card.

You'll find a program called "ddrum4Tool" on the CD-ROM disk in the back of the manual. This is the application your computer will use to preview and load sounds into the ddrum4 SE module. The module has 8.12 MB of memory for storing sounds, but you'll be able to load 24 MB of data through the use of a patented compression scheme unique to Clavia and ddrum. The CD contains four sound libraries: Factory Library 3.0 (new samples for the ddrum4), Sound Library (previous ddrum samples), Synth Library (synthesized drum sounds), and Vintage Library.

The convenient part of the ddrum4tool software is that it allows you to listen to the sound samples *prior* to loading them into the ddrum module. You can select the sounds you like from the CD-ROM or from the ddrum Internet-based resources (www.clavia.se/ddrum/sounds/index.html), and listen to them through your computer speakers or headphones before loading them into custom drumkits inside the sound module. As an added bonus, everything on the CD-ROM is also available on the Web site. If something tragic happens to your disk, you can instantly regain access to all the resources.

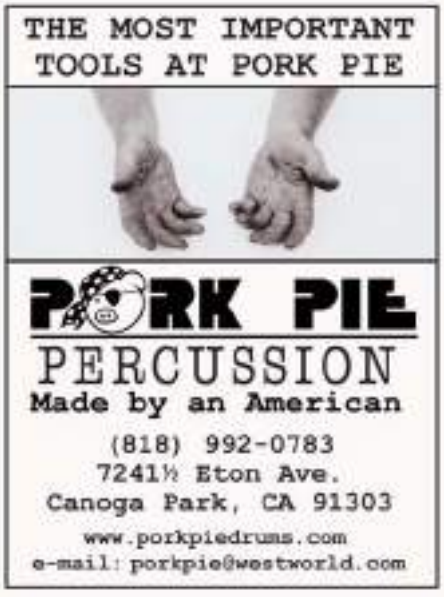
The ddrum sound libraries should give you plenty of choices for designing custom drumkits. If these don't have exactly what you want, you can record your own samples using a microphone, your computer, and basic home studio software. Just be sure to edit your samples so that there is no dead space in the beginning, and so that the volume tapers off smoothly at the end. Consider using shaping curves to taper down the sample to a nice, smooth drop-off.

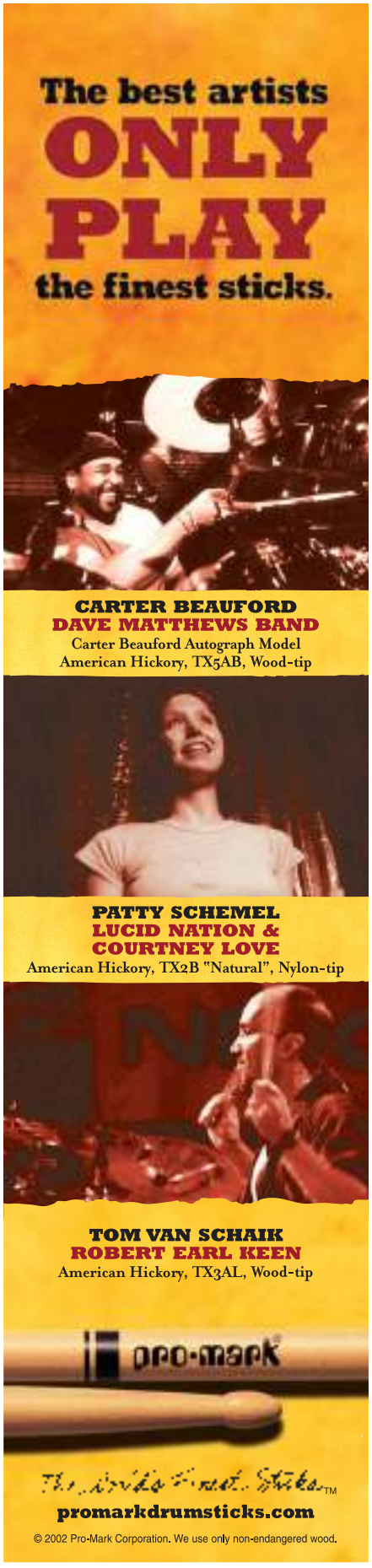
Sounds

The factory-installed sound samples provided by ddrum are recorded using 16-bit technology, and they provide a full spectrum of tone. When I said earlier that the mesh version of the Cast Precision Pad doesn't have pressure sensitivity, that doesn't mean it doesn't track velocity, which is what MIDI uses to determine volume. The dynamic range is divided into 1,000 levels, making the ddrum4 SE *very* sensitive and expressive. The module senses your volume changes, and the sound responds accordingly using dynamic multi-samples. If you are on a patch that has a loud, ringing overtone when played hard, that same patch will quiet down to a soft, subtle tap when played softly.

Operation

When you power up the module, it will always start out in the "Palette" mode. Twist the rotary dial and you go to "Kit" mode. You can set up kits in either mode by using the Palette button in each section (kick, snare, toms, percussion/cymbals) to vary the patch or the sound of the patch. Since all changes made in the Palette mode are automatically stored in the Palette memory, you may want to explore your options in one of the twenty-six user kits or sixty-three factory ROM kits. Resetting the module is easy if you want to get back to the factory setup, but if you've deleted sounds from the module's memory, you'll have to reload them using the CD-ROM included with the manual. So





Electronic Review

try out the existing kits before you go too far in the editing process. You'll also need to verify that the snare, toms, and percussion channels are set to the "mesh head" setting called "Mesh Head 1 (mh1)."

The design of the module certainly seems to be geared toward "ease of use." When you hit a drum or cymbal pad, a red LED beside the control section button for that pad on the face of the module lights up to let you know it is getting a signal. In addition, a vertical row of LEDs over by the system area also lights up to indicate signal strength. The kit number and parameter settings are displayed on a small alpha/numeric LED display. This display is small in comparison to some competing modules that have extensive graphics, but it gets the job done.

A knob at the top of each pad-control section adjusts the sensitivity, also called Threshold. If you hit the tom and you see an LED come on by the ride cymbal button, you know to turn down the threshold for the cymbal because it's being falsely triggered by vibration from the tom. Keep playing the tom while adjusting the threshold for the cymbal until the false trigging is gone.

Considering that the sounds in this module have been created by four of the most popular drumset players of our time, you'd expect them to be great. And for the most part, they are. I did find a few tom samples that seemed to cut off a bit abruptly, which I could hear when playing these sounds without any musical accompaniment, and with the headphone volume up fairly loud. This can be remedied by shortening the sustain level from the original 100 to 83. At that setting the samples tapered off smoothly.

Another part of the sound module that definitely helps out pro-level players is the output section. There are six output jacks: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, and B4. The A outputs, which are similar to stereo outs, allow you to pan the drums and cymbals across the stereo field. (A1 is also marked "MONO" and provides a combination of A1 and A2 if there is only a cord connected to A1.)

You can assign drums and cymbals to the B outputs so that you have separate outs for kick, snare, toms, and cymbals, or so that you have two pairs of stereo outs. The master volume knob on the module does not control the B outputs. They have a set level that is only changed via the MIDI volume parameter. Your band's sound engineer will like this feature. A headphone out can be used for practicing silently, which is something most of the rest of the people in your life will like!

If you are using the ddrum4 SE sound module as part of a MIDI setup and you don't intend to play the drum pads while the MIDI file runs, you can turn off the pads by setting the sound module to the "pad disabled" mode. This lets the computer processor inside the module work much faster with the incoming MIDI data.

Conclusions

If your local music retailer doesn't have a ddrum4 SE kit for you to try out, you can still "try before you buy" right from the ddrum Web site (www.clavia.se/ddrum). MP3 files containing demo songs played by a Swedish drummer named Christer Jansson give you a chance to hear the Signature Series sounds. The site suggests that you play the samples through a sound system that can handle high transients so the sound won't become distorted. (As I mentioned earlier, these samples have a lot of dynamic range.)

The ddrum4 SE kit as reviewed lists for $3,595 and sells at major multi-outlet retailers for around $2,700. You can find cheaper electronic kits, but not with mesh heads that track excellently or sound modules with advanced programmability. There are many quality features about this kit, but the simple fact that you can load new sounds into the module's memory will go a long way toward keeping the kit interesting for some time to come.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: Cast-aluminum pads with mesh heads, including snare, three toms, and bass drum. Rubber ride and crash cymbal pads. Hi-hat unit attaches to separate hi-hat stand (not included). Entire kit mounts on supplied aluminum rack. Snare pad mounts on either the rack mounting system or a separate stand.

List price **$3,595**

Y (727) 519-9669, www.clavia.se/ddrum.

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The JAZZ LIONS

The Latest And Greatest To Invade The Apple

by Ken Micallef

Every five years or so you can feel the tremors. While New York City gentrifies from drug-infected to Disney-infested, incoming jazz rhythmatists hit the circuit morphing, transforming, and advancing the music into unpredictable new shapes. Smalls, Smoke, Village Vanguard, Jazz Gallery, Blue Note, Zinc Bar, Detour—the clubs collide and so do the sounds.

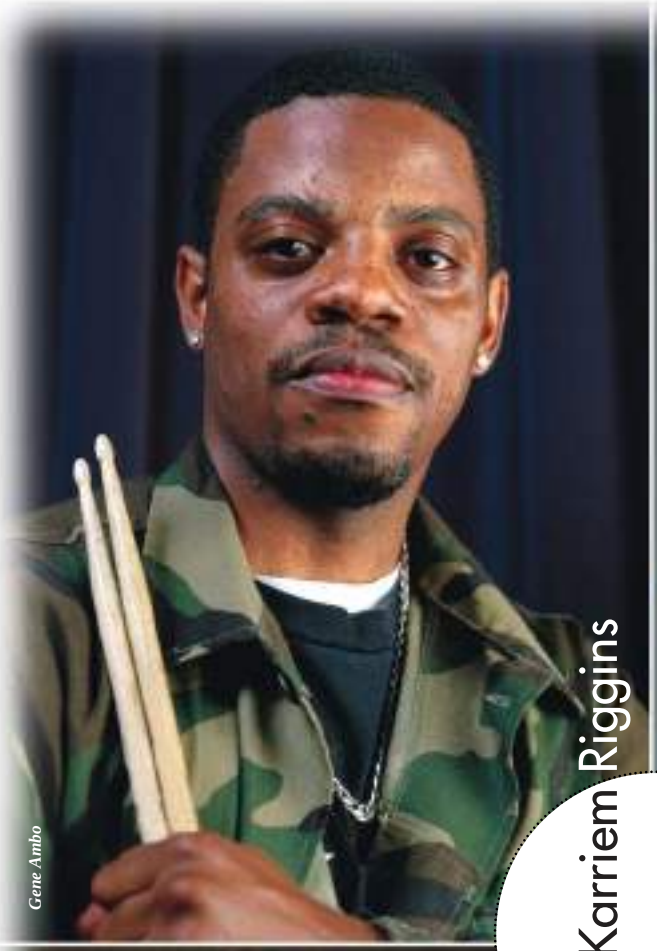
"The jazz musician's life is not normal," says monster drummer Ali Jackson. "We get up at 10:00 in the morning, practice all day, check out music, then go out to play. You can't make much money in New York unless you're on the road all the time. Ask any chick with a regular 9-to-5 job if she wants to be dealing with someone like that. It's not normal."

Low money, distant (or dangerous) females, serious competition, late nights riding in Gypsy cabs that charge $30 to carry you and your drums to some tiny apartment in Queens or Brooklyn—no, the New York jazz life is not normal. But still, they come. Many think Manhattan's jazz scene is scuffling, that there are fewer places than ever to hone your craft. Others say it has always been tough, that you have to find your niche and make your own scene.

The dream of hitting it big as a New York jazz drummer continues to lure the hungry, the foolish, the talented, and the delusional. Where yesterday's fresh young faces included Nasheet Waits, Eric Harland, Clarence Penn, Gregory Hutchinson, Bill Stewart, and Brian Blade, prospective upstart talent looks for a break, even a crumb. And if this report is any indication, the majority of the talent hails from urban soil.

Detroit offers the double bill of Karriem Riggins and Ali Jackson. Camden, New Jersey relinquishes firecracker Mickey Roker protégé Rodney Green. New York, New York creates pan global melting pot madness courtesy of Daniel Freedman. But year after year, Manhattan swings 'til an ungodly hour, with tiny closets billing themselves as serious jazz hangs, improvisational powder kegs where the young lions hustle, bustle, and swing.

These new swingers create drumming as varied as the music they play, and their lives beyond the drums are just as interesting as their rudimental concepts. The next wave is challenging the very notion of what constitutes jazz drumming. Embracing its past with no particular respect for its future, Green, Riggins, Freedman, and Jackson are living in the moment, stirring the soup, illuminating Manhattan's midnight walk as they keep puttin' it together with poly-currents of heavy sounds.



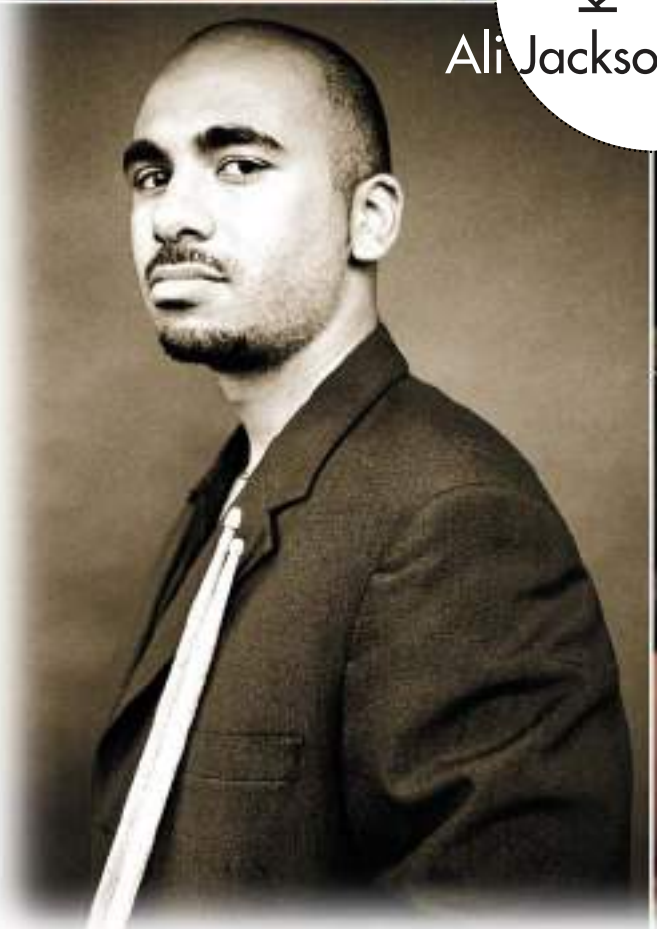
Gene Ambo

Karriem Riggins

Ann Lichtenstien

Daniel Freedman

Rodney Green

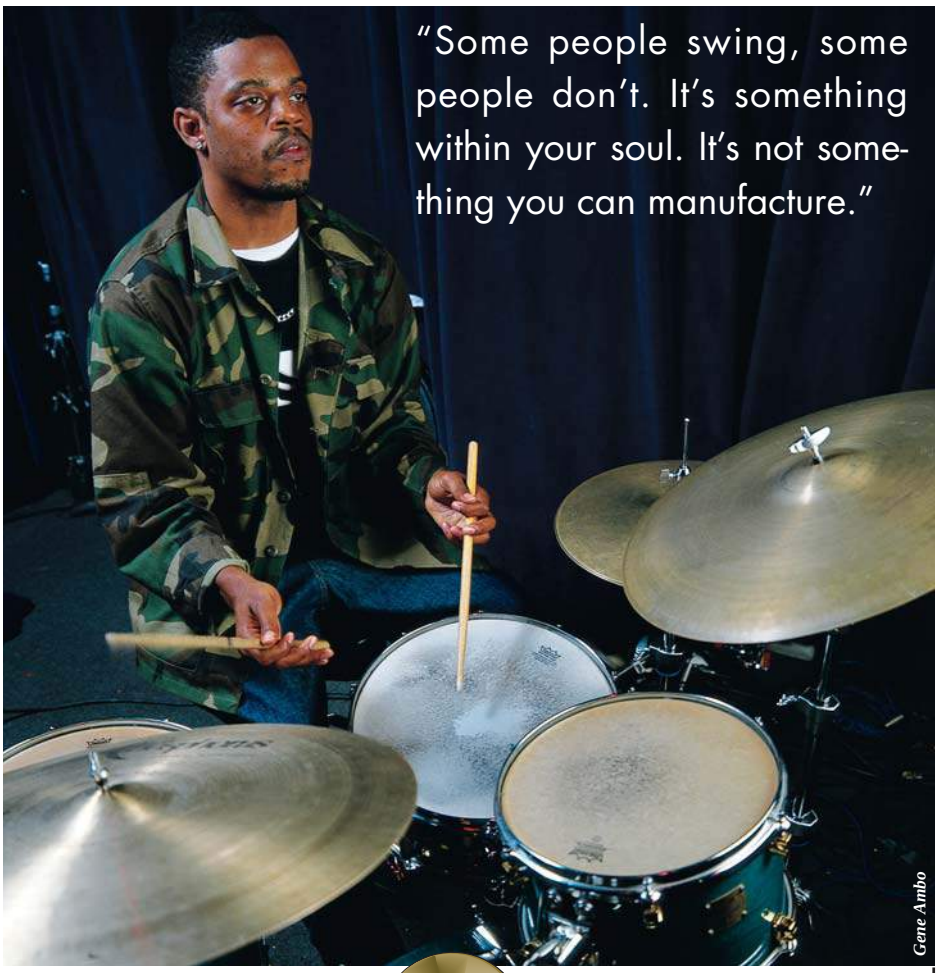


Ali Jackson

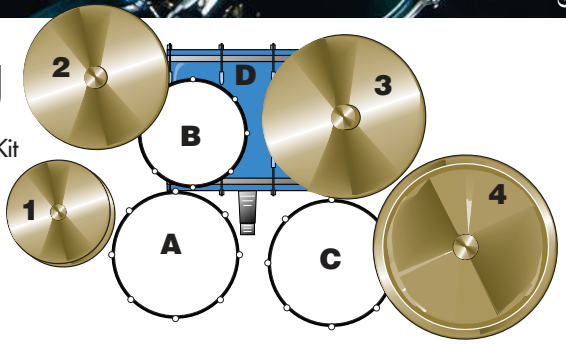
Paul La Raia

Karriem Riggins

With as many hip-hop production credits on his résumé as jazz gigs, Karriem Riggins is a unique musician, crossing the present with the past. With Ray Brown, Mulgrew Miller, Benny Green, and Eric Reed, Karriem's drumming is concise and driven, his steady, smoking swing recalling the old-school charm of Art Taylor or Jimmy Cobb. Back in Detroit, Karriem is better known for his production chops with such adventurous hip-hoppers as Common, Slum Village, and Jay Dee. He produced The Roots' next epic, *Phrenology*, and he's currently recording drum tracks for Erykah Badu's next release. Where do these styles cross and make sense? For Riggins, it's only natural.



Riggins' Rig



Drums: Yamaha 30th Anniversary Kit

A. 5½x14 wood snare
B. 8x12 tom
C. 14x14 floor tom
D. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 13" 1960s K Zildjian hi-hat
2. 18" K Zildjian crash
3. 20" K Zildjian ride
4. 22" K Zildjian China

Plus Zildjian 7A sticks, Regal Tip brushes

MD: How do you switch gears from playing straight-ahead to working with Slum Village and Common?

Karriem: I grew up with hip-hop *and* jazz. I live in both worlds, but jazz came first. I began playing drums when I was eight.

MD: Do you ever foresee a time when drumming takes a back seat to production duties?

Karriem: Never. I have to play drums. That's where I get the majority of my ideas from.

MD: Who were your earliest influences?

Karriem: Philly Joe Jones, Lex Humphries, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, and Louis Hayes. I saw Elvin when I was really young, and my dad was a drummer. I played along with *Kind Of Blue* and *Kelly At Midnight*.

MD: How did you go from local gigs to landing work with Roy Hargrove, Ray Brown, and Stephen Scott?

Karriem: When I was seventeen I moved to New York and did some work with Betty Carter. That's where I met a lot of people, including Mulgrew Miller. I already knew Greg Hutchinson, and he helped me out. The Stephen Scott Trio was my first gig. I was in New York about three months before I started working.

MD: What did you focus on before New York?

Karriem: Mainly having a strong beat, a strong pulse. I listened to players like Philly Joe, Jimmy Cobb, drummers who have a strong pulse. There are a lot of drummers who don't play pulse. But I was attracted to it. I did Stephen Scott for two tours, then I joined Mulgrew's trio for a year and a half, then I joined Roy Hargrove's quintet. And I joined Ray Brown in '97.

MD: How did playing with Brown differ from working with other bassists?

Karriem: His groove was the strongest groove ever. He would play so on top of the beat it was ridiculous. I had never played that on top, so I had to find a way to even it out. I had to learn how to play with that type of energy. We did *Live At Starbucks*. I worked with him for three years. He taught me to be strong and confident and to never hold back.

MD: Are there correlations between jazz and hip-hop drumming?

Karriem: Simplicity is the key. With jazz, you always have to search for the next idea

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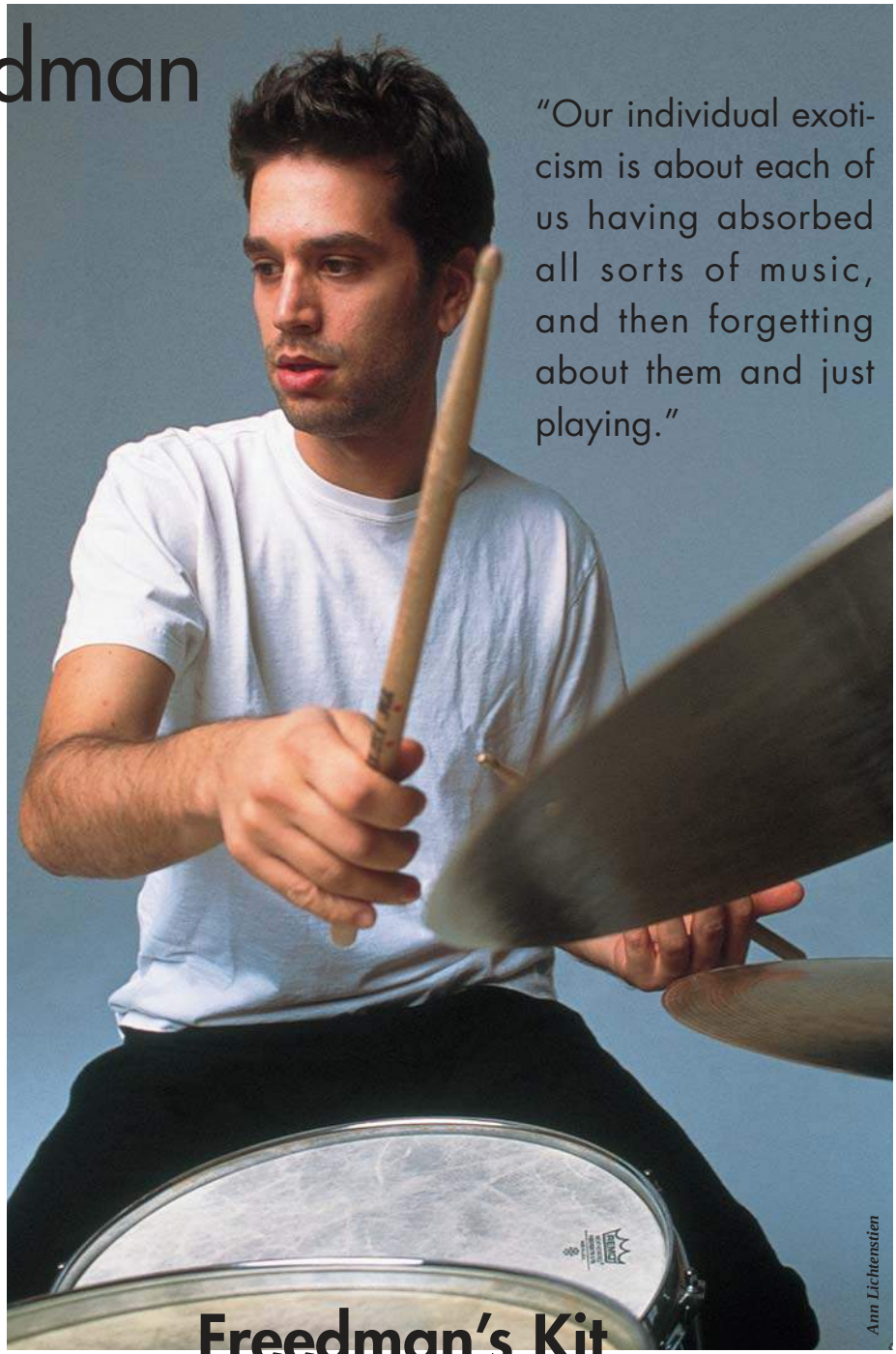
Daniel Freedman



Spanning the globe in search of the constant variety of sound, Lower East Side native Daniel Freedman is a polyglot. Freedman studied Yoruba drumming in Africa, smoked cigars while pounding congas in Cuba, and jammed in the streets of the Sinai searching for the ultimate Middle Eastern rhythm. Freedman grew up in an artistic New York family, and studied with Max Roach and Billy Higgins, as well as jazz master Vernell Fournier and various master African drummers.

Freedman is no one-trick pony. He's a musician exploring the intense, intricate edges of global rhythmic tradition, past, present, and future. And he swings like mad. His *Trio* release (Fresh Sounds) meets at the intersection of American jazz, Cuban rhumba, African bata, and cocktail sensuality, an album of exotic rhythms and hothouse moods.

Daniel: I wanted to make an album that I would want to listen to, not just a display of technique. In the different places I've traveled to, the mood always stays with me. That's what stays with you, the feeling or the music of that place. I wanted to convey those atmospheres.

MD: And I see on your table that you're reading the book *African Rhythm And African Sensibility*.

Daniel: That has interviews with master African drummers. Their wisdom goes past drumming. They talk about remaining humble to accept new information.

MD: You've studied in Cuba, Africa, the Middle East….

Daniel: But that's only part of what I do. I grew up playing straight-ahead. I was obsessed with Philly Joe Jones and Kenny Clarke. I went to Israel with Omar Avital first in '93. I heard incredible local musicians in Jerusalem. I played with master Moroccan musicians and recorded a record there with Nino Biton—they call him "El Maghrebi." That was a lesson in traditional Andulusian music. And in Sinai I heard Sudanese or Bedouin musicians who aren't professionals, but who are *burning*.

MD: You were absorbing the culture.

Daniel: Yes, many trips through Israel and Egypt were like that. There's mixing and not mixing. My girlfriend was of Yemenite background, so she exposed me to that

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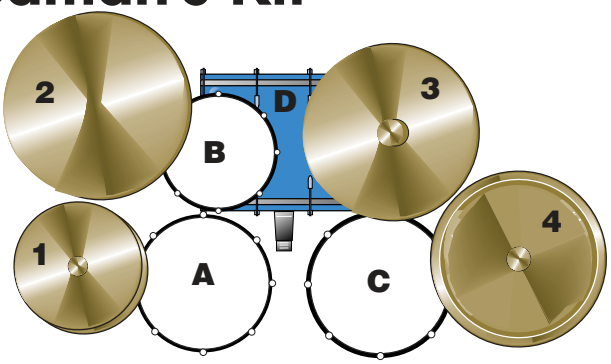
Freedman's Kit

Drums: Gretsch
- **A.** 5½x14 snare
- **B.** 8x12 tom
- **C.** 14x15 floor tom
- **D.** 16x18 bass drum

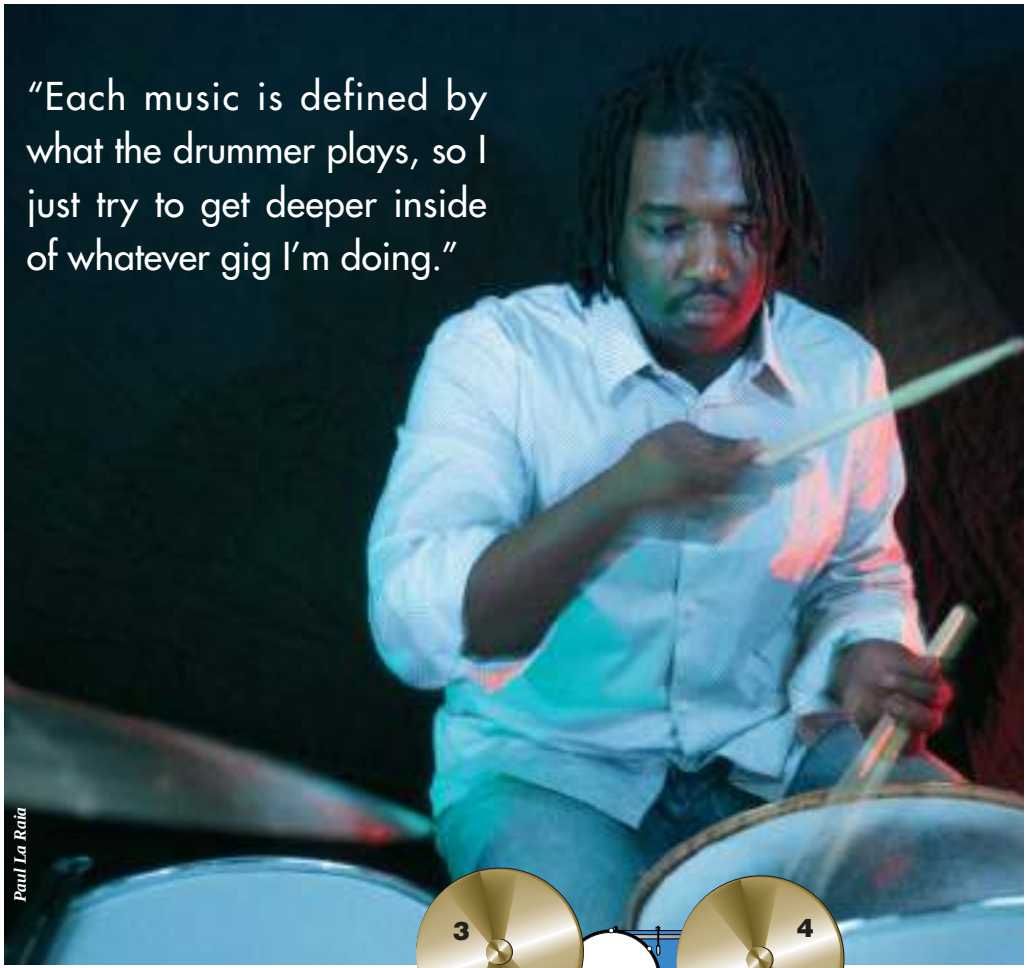
Cymbals: various
1. 14" Bosphorus hi-hats
2. 21" Bosphorus flat ride
3. 20" K Zildjian ride
4. 20" China



Plus an LP Mambo cowbell mounted on the bass drum, various Tibetan bells, bongos, congas, doumbeks, darbukas, bata drums, shells, timbales, JCR cha-cha bells, and a pandiero.

Rodney Green

A mature twenty-three-year-old who recently left a two-year stint with jazz diva Diana Krall, Rodney Green is a perpetual student of the instrument. He was sitting in at Ortliebs Jazz Club in Camden before he was old enough to drink. A house gig with Patti LaBelle was his baptism in funk. And he cut his big-league jazz teeth playing with bassist extraordinaire Christian McBride. Still, Green gave up the late night, "Let's go to the Zinc Bar" lifestyle to pull down the big bucks with Krall. Her sexy style, quiet good looks, and standards piano mastery have made her a star. But with Green's massive swing groove and fast acceptance into the New York scene, you wonder why he traded Manhattan's flame for a brush with fame.



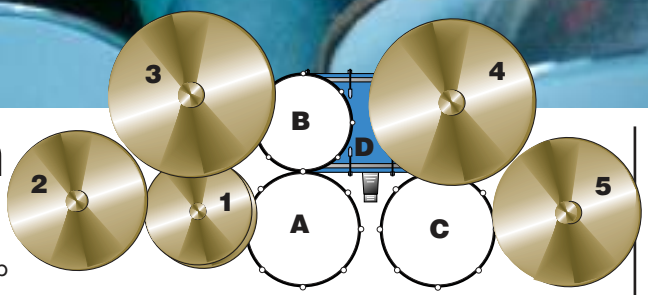
Paul La Raia

The Green Machine

Drums: Modern Drum Shop
A. 6½x14 Ludwig snare
B. 8x12 tom
C. 14x14 floor tom
D. 14x16 bass drum

Cymbals: various
1. 14" 1950s K Zildjian hi-hats
2. 19" Bosphorus Master Series ride
3. 22" 1950s K Zildjian ride
4. 22" Bosphorus Master Series ride with rivets
5. 20" Bosphorus ride/crash

Plus Aquarian heads, Regal Tip sticks, mallets, and brushes, and Audix microphones.



Rodney: It's a really crazy time right now. Leaving Diana Krall's gig, playing with Charlie Haden, Mulgrew Miller, and Eric Reed, it's weird getting back to booking myself. For the last two years I was in a band. You go where they go, everything else fits in the middle. But I got restless doing the same thing. It was like a marriage.

MD: Was it boring playing mostly bossa novas, brushes, and ballads?

Rodney: Each music is defined by what the drummer plays, so I just try to get deeper inside of whatever gig I'm doing. You can always make it sound better and more authentic, especially if you're dealing with Brazilian rhythms. My motivation was to be the best drummer I could be for the gig. Roy Haynes worked with Sarah Vaughan for five years, and that gave him something that a lot of other drummers didn't have back then.

Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Jo Jones, they all played for dancers, they knew the difference between a walking ballad and a dancing ballad. Even when Elvin Jones is burning, there's a lot of foundation there that allows him to work in a different way. That's what I wanted to develop.

MD: You have a big groove no matter what you're playing.

Rodney: That's a combination of my attitude when I'm playing and the drummers that I've listened to. Billy Higgins, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones—those drummers hug the band like a blanket. And I play the groove from the bottom up. Some guys use bright ride cymbals and play four on the hi-hat, but playing old Ks and feathering the bass drum is where it's at; it makes the band sound fuller.

Having the opportunity to play with bass players with really good sounds, like McBride and Charlie Haden, has been helpful. They don't have these amp-ey sounds. Trying to blend with cats who have more of an acoustic sound makes your sound bigger and wider. When you get to play softer and fuller, there is a lot to be learned.

MD: Where are you from?

Rodney: I'm from Camden, New Jersey. I grew up going to Ortliebs Jazz House and seeing Mickey Roker. This was in 1995 and '96. He did weekends with Shirley Scott. And Scott became my first road gig, subbing for Mickey when I was sixteen.

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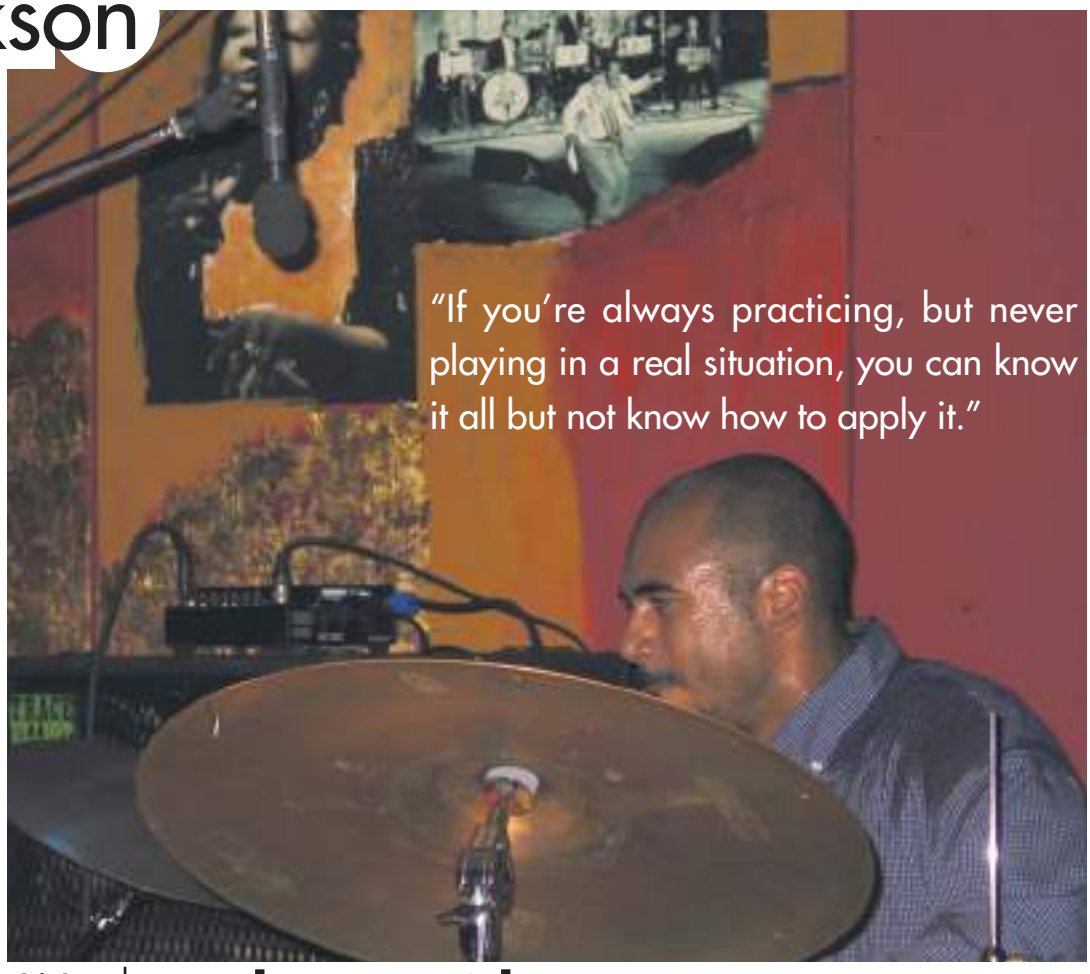
Ali Jackson



Ali Jackson is Manhattan's greatest mystery drummer. Didn't his dad, Ali Sr., play bass with Trane back in the day? Didn't Ali play with Aretha Franklin? And in addition to his ongoing gig with Wynton Marsalis (for the past ten years) and his esteemed drum chair with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, wasn't it Ali who recently scored the soundtrack to the indy political flick, *Balkanization*?

Ali finds time to cut solo records, like the high-energy *Groove@Jazz En Tete*, hit the road with Chick Corea, and record his own group, Horns From The Hood. His production work includes R&B acts like Art Of Soul, Hyperstatic Union, and Denay Jones. And he's drummed with KRS One. *And* Ali is a devoted father of two. Not bad for a twenty-six-year-old.

A recent performance at NYC's Jazz Gallery found Ali deconstructing solos with tornado-like energy and the agility of a ballet dancer.

MD: You play with Wynton Marsalis and many artists. You've also done a lot of production work. Where do you find the time?

Ali: I started on MIDI when I was ten, playing with Roland sound modules in school. And my cousin played keyboards on house records for KMS in Detroit. I got involved with production there.

MD: You played in the street with your dad?

Ali: Yes, he played bass. I was about eight. My mom was a classical pianist, my father played with Monk and Coltrane. As I got older I grew into the instrument, and I also began playing piano when I was five.

MD: Playing swing for you must have been like walking.

Ali: My father died when I was eleven, but I had to keep studying. And my father was very hands-on. That gave me an edge. If you're always practicing, but never playing in a real situation, you can know it all but not know how to apply it.

I worked the Detroit scene with Marcus Belgrave, Teddy Harris, and Ernie

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Jackson's Ride

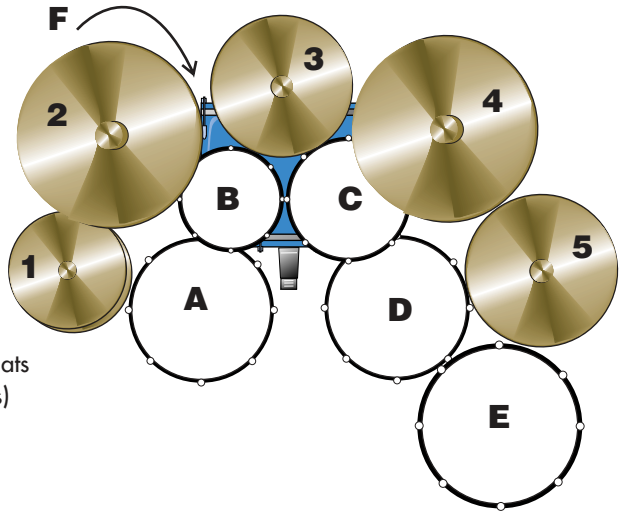
Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute

- **A.** 5½x14 snare
- **B.** 8x10 tom
- **C.** 10x12 tom
- **D.** 14x14 floor tom
- **E.** 14x16 floor tom
- **F.** 16x18 bass drum

Cymbals: various

1. 13½" 1920s K Zildjian hi-hats (or 1950s 13½" K Zildjians)
2. 20" Bosphorus ride (or 20" K Zildjian ride)
3. 15" K Zildjian crash
4. 20" Paiste Traditional ride
5. 16" Zildjian crash

Plus Regal Tip brushes and 8A sticks



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Karriem Riggins continued from page 122

to take the music to the next level. Hip-hop is so simple, if you do something complicated it tears the groove apart. It's like night and day. When I play hip-hop, I just think of those old Big Daddy Kane records, real simple grooves.

MD: What was essential to your being able to work in New York?

Karriem: Just being able to listen and accept criticism, and being humble. Mulgrew Miller hipped me to a lot of different ideas. A lot of drummers don't concentrate on the ride cymbal. Mulgrew and I see eye to eye on that.

MD: He played with Tony Williams for so long. Did he talk about Tony's ride cymbal beat?

Karriem: All the time. He said that Tony's ride cymbal was so strong, but he also had left-hand and hi-hat patterns that were so hip, kind of how Tony was influenced by Roy Haynes.

MD: What do you practice now?

Karriem: Press rolls. They're the first thing I do. If I play a ten-minute press roll, it loosens me up. And I stretch. As for my head, I've been listening to Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* and Miles' *Water Babies*. Those records make you think.

MD: Can anyone learn to swing? Do you either have it or you don't?

Karriem: Some people swing, some people don't—definitely. It's something within your soul. It's not something you can manufacture, just like some people can dance and some can't.

Gene Ambo

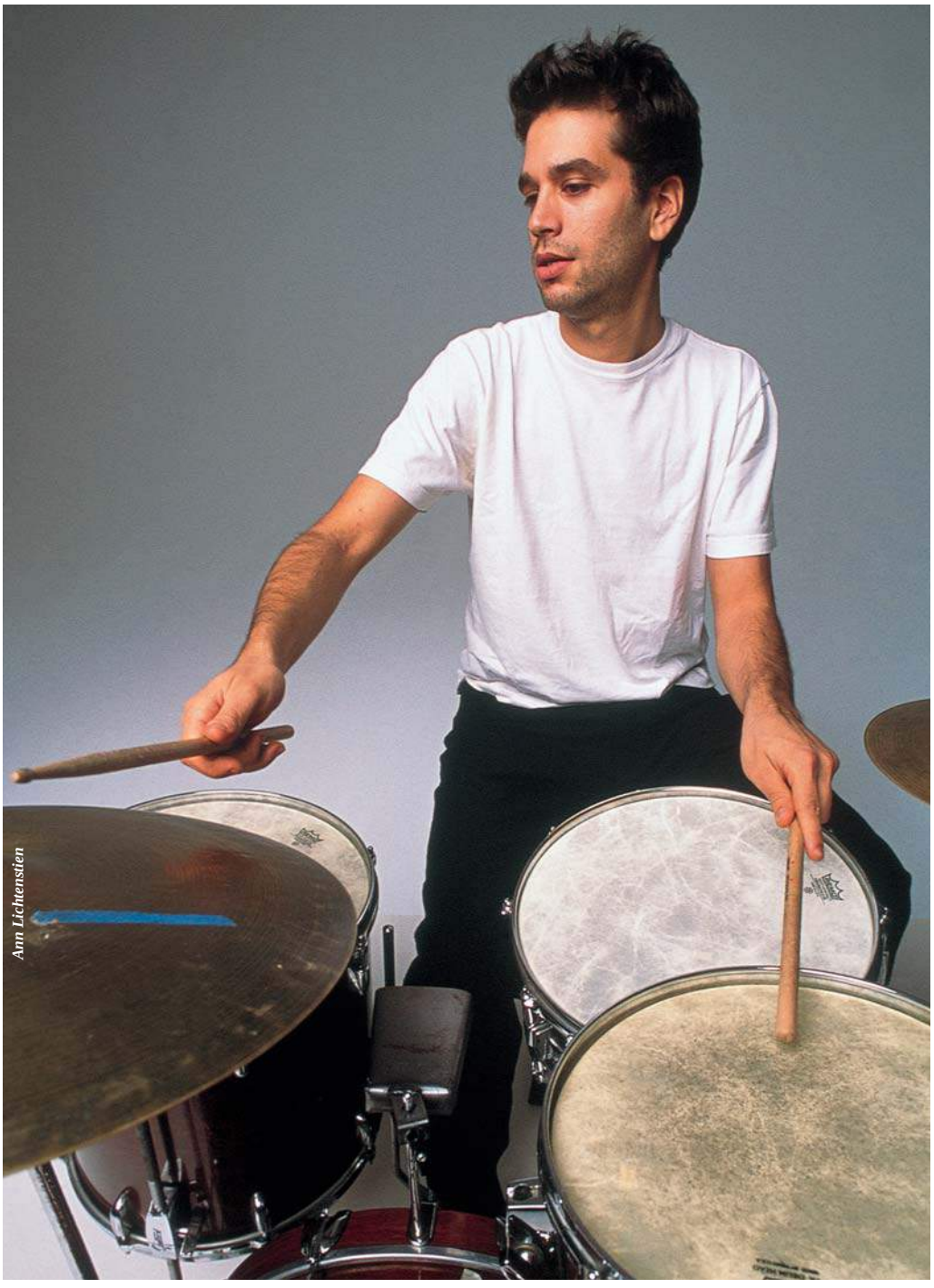
Riggins On Record

Recordings

Artist	Album
Ray Brown	Live At Starbucks
Mulgrew Miller	The Sequel
Benny Green	Funky
Eric Reed	Musicale
Rodney Whitaker	Children Of The Light
Roy Hargrove	Family

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Kind Of Blue	Jimmy Cobb
Wynton Kelly	Kelly At Midnight	Philly Joe Jones
Freddie Hubbard	The Body & The Soul	Louis Hayes, Philly Joe Jones
Miles Davis	Water Babies	Tony Williams
Chick Corea	Now He Sings, Now He Sobs	Roy Haynes


Ann Lichtenstien

music, which is super funky, almost like swing. It hipped me to how a rhythm that sounds simple can be so deep. One note can be in a place and you try to play along with it and you wonder what are the in-between rhythms that they're feeling that make it sound so mystical. It's all rooted in traditional feels.

I went to Mali in '97 and studied djembe and djun djun with different master drummers. There was so much music every day. There are balifon orchestras in the streets. I played drums with Toumani Djoubate, the famous kora player.

MD: How did you fit in?

Daniel: I didn't play the same part they would play, but the clave is from Africa. Everything they would play is in clave. The feeling of the clave for them is almost more swing- or triplet-oriented. We went to one village where these cats were playing a pure swing rhythm on two metal pipes. That was an eye-opener.

MD: What does bata drumming involve?

Daniel: Yoruba drumming is from Nigeria, using three hourglass-shaped drums that you play lying across your lap. The lead drum has small bells on it. Bata is like Bach, it's really perfect. All the parts are set, like in classical music. There are variations, but the parts are perfectly integrated.

Drummers are really respected in these different cultures, which is totally unlike how it is in the US. In Africa they are the keepers of history. That's inspiring. Jazz drummers in America are like that—hearing Elvin Jones is a sacred event. That is a voodoo ceremony in itself.

MD: What did you learn studying bata?

Daniel: It increases the brain's ability to hold information. You have to learn so many different parts and execute them in the feeling of the music. You have to be on point.

MD: What did you study in Cuba?

Daniel: I studied with Changuito, the drummer who played with the group Los Van Van. He's the inventor of songo.

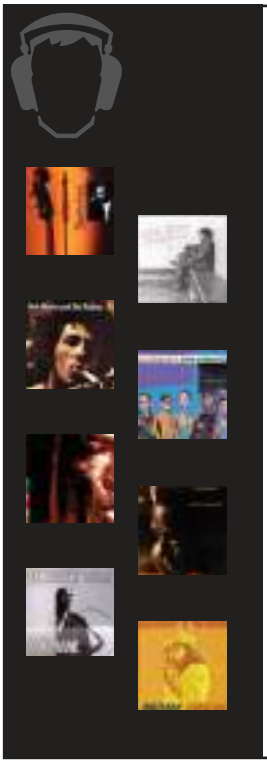
One of the first things that blew my mind was hearing Los Munequitos De Matanzas, a famous rhumba group from Cuba. I lived with that tape for a few years. I didn't know what they were doing, so I listened until I could pick out what each of the three congueros was doing. They have specific parts, but there's room for improvisation.

MD: "Fareed," the first track on your album, sounds like, for lack of a more informed description, a gypsy groove.

Daniel: That's an Algerian or North African groove, but it's almost Latin too.

MD: "Rise Up" has an exotic yet cocktail feel.

Daniel: It's just a 3/4 waltz with some metric modulations. Playing all this hand percussion, the way I started to hear the drums has changed. When I play the drumset, I'm



Freedman Faves

Recordings

Artist	Album
Avital, Cohen, Freedman, Avishai	Third World Love Songs
Daniel Freedman	Trio
Jason Lindner Ensemble	Premonition
The Omer Avital Group	Think With Your Heart
Jazz Underground	Live At Smalls
Ben Wolfe	Thirteen Sketches

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
John Coltrane Quartet	Complete Impulse! Studio Recordings	Elvin Jones
Thelonious Monk	The Unique Thelonious Monk	Art Blakey, Frankie Dunlop
Thelonious Monk	Monk's Dream	Art Blakey, Frankie Dunlop
Miles Davis	Nefertiti	Tony Williams
John Coltrane	Live At Newport	Roy Haynes
Los Munequitos De Matanzas	Rumba Caliente 88/77 (on Qbadisk)	Los Munequitos
Bob Marley	Catch A Fire	Carlton Barrett
Bob Marley	Rastaman Vibration	Carlton Barrett
James Brown	In The Jungle Groove	Clyde Stubblefield, John "Jabo" Starks, Melvin Parker
Doudou N'Daye Rose	Djabote	fifty drummers

getting other tones out of the drums. That's becoming my sound. Papa Jo Jones got all over the drums. Our individual exoticism is about each of us having absorbed all sorts of music, and then forgetting about them and just playing.

MD: Is "Freak Of Nature" a Moroccan groove?

Daniel: It's another tune in 3/4 time, but it's subdivided differently. And besides the 3/4, we add a double-time jungle groove. The rhythms get blurred. A jungle groove can sound like a rhumba or a mozambique. They all mesh into one. I want it all to sound organic and have the rhythms bleed together.

MD: "Montuno Picasso" is burning.

Daniel: That's in between minor and major. I was either doubling the bass or adding different accents and songo patterns with the bass drum. I like to take the different folkloric patterns and apply them to the drumset.

MD: The last track is a swinger.

Daniel: There are many grooves, but at the end of the day we like to swing. That's what I grew up playing. I would listen to Max Roach and Kenny Clarke all day. I was able to study with Billy Higgins when I was fourteen. His emphasis was on accompaniment and making the whole music sound good, not getting stuck on playing hip drum stuff.

MD: What else did you work on when you were coming up?

Daniel: Charles Wilcoxon's *Swing Solos* book and George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control*. I also played along with Philly Joe records. And I studied with Max Roach for two summers at the University of Massachusetts, and Vernell Fournier, who encouraged me to study African music. He told me I had a natural ability for it. Maybe he heard how much I love it.

At one of my lessons with Vernell, I hit the snare drum half-heartedly, and he yelled at me. "*Never* hit a drum like that. Hit a drum with conviction and meaning. Play the note, don't just throw it out there. Stand behind it." I try to maintain that kind of integrity.

MD: What are your current projects?

Daniel: I play with saxophonists Charles Owens and Michael Blake; I play bongos and timbales in a traditional salsa band with a great old-timer, Ray Santiago. We play at The Forbidden City. And I produce a lot of music in my home studio. I've checked out so many different styles of music besides jazz, I have a sense of being able to incorporate different influences and elements and make it all sound cohesive. ●

Rodney Green

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I've been playing the instrument ever since I can remember. My father is an organist and my mother is a singer in church.

MD: When did you begin lessons?

Rodney: I studied with Scott Robinson in Philly. He encouraged me to get the basics down. I had played in church and around town a little. I knew the rudiments but didn't know how to apply them. Scott was adamant that I learn the fundamentals, whether it was *Stick Control*, Charlie Wilcoxon's *Rudimental Swing Solos*, Keith Copeland's *Creative Coordination*, or Podemski's snare drum method.

MD: How did you break into recording with people like Christian McBride?

Rodney: My enthusiasm. Stefon Harris, Tim Warfield, Orrin Evans—they were like agents for me. All of my gigs came from those people. That's how I met and got my butt kicked by Nasheet Waits. When I got to town everybody could play a lot more drums than I could.

When I was growing up I wasn't allowed to listen to records at home, for religious reasons. I only heard records when I got to New York, when I was sev-

Rodney's Records

Recordings

Artist	Album
Greg Osby	Banned In New York
Christian McBride	Sci-Fi
Eric Reed	Happiness
Kango Nakamura	Divine
JD Allen III	In Search Of
Wycliffe Gordon Quintet	What You Dealin' With

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Booker Little	Booker Little Four	Max Roach
Jo Jones	The Essential Jo Jones	Jo Jones
Ahmad Jamal	Live At The Spotlight	Vernell Fournier
John Coltrane	Ballads	Elvin Jones
Joe Henderson	State Of The Tenor	Al Foster
Eric Dolphy	Out To Lunch	Tony Williams

enteen. I did hear *A Love Supreme* when my cousin played it for me.

MD: What happened after the house gig with Patti LaBelle?

Rodney: Bobby Watson took me on the road for two weeks when I was a junior in high school. After high school I came to New York, and Stefon Harris hooked me up with Greg Osby. He hires people sight unseen, no rehearsal. I didn't even know who he was. Eventually I did my first record with Osby, *Zero*. And we did *Banned In New York*.

MD: How did the reality of the sessions differ from your expectations?

Rodney: You listen back and you sound nothing like you think. They often didn't capture the sound, and that's a big thing I've had to figure out. Now I have an endorsement with Audix microphones to help me get the same sound that I hear when I'm playing the drums.

MD: Did you fall in easily with Osby and Christian McBride?

Rodney: No, those gigs were very difficult. I was doing two things at once, growing up as a musician and as a young man. Eric Harland and I split Joe Henderson's last tour. Joe didn't like the sound to be too heavy. He didn't like too many 2 and 4s on the hi-hat in a row. I had to learn to play funk with McBride, and I developed a lightness playing with Krall. And there is a diligence and thoughtfulness that I learned playing with Osby. I want to be like Paul Motian, in that when I'm forty-five I'll have all these sounds I have taken from people I've worked with over the years.

MD: What's coming up for you?

Rodney: I'm on tour with Charlie Haden, supporting his *American Dreams* album. And I've been working with Eric Reed and Benny Green, as well as with Mulgrew Miller. But we'll see what happens. Word is spreading that I'm around again.

Ali Jackson

continued from page 125

Rogers. I also played African and Brazilian percussion with Aretha Franklin for a year when I was sixteen. Bernard Purdie played drums.

MD: I get the impression that you're more focused on music than the drums.

Ali: I love the drums. I consider myself among the best. But there are so many things that make someone's whole musical character complete. I play piano and compose, which helps my jazz drumming. The more information you have, the more variety and a larger platter you have to choose from.

MD: What are some of the gigs you've held in NYC?

Ali: I played with Bill Saxton for a year, Cyrus Chestnut for two years, Wynton from '95 to '97, Jacky Terrasson for a year and a half in '97, multi-instrumentalist James Morrison, and Harry "Sweets" Edison and Dee Dee Bridgewater in '98. And I hosted a tribute to Max Roach in November at Lincoln Center as part of the Year Of The Drum event, performing and arranging his music.

MD: Why are you not on these artists' records?

Ali: I left New York in '98 to be with my family. I just came back last year. That's probably why. But people are beginning to know who I am.

MD: When I saw you at The Jazz Gallery, you burned with so much energy, which also fires *Groove@Jazz En Tete*.

Ali: I'm a passionate person. I don't compromise my spirit. I don't care what someone thinks of what I do. I will compromise my playing to fit whatever the music needs. I will fuel whatever the situation needs to be the most resounding.

MD: What have you worked on most?

Ali: Touch and control. I came up playing rudiments softly and in control as well as loud and fast. Playing intently without the volume is difficult. With brushes, you can play into the drum or against the drum. If you're playing off of the drum, it's a different technique and it's a lot lighter. I pattern a lot of my brush playing after Jo Jones.

MD: You've been working with the Wynton Marsalis quartet since 1994, and now you're filling the drum chair for the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. What's the challenge of playing with Marsalis?

Ali: Sometimes people play in a kind of repetitive-phrase format, but with him it is different every time. You have to play with him in the moment. You cannot be on automatic.

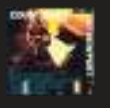
MD: Have you played a lot of big band?

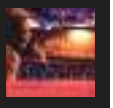
Ali: I played in the Mingus big band for a time and in Teddy Harris's New Breed Bebop Society. There aren't a lot of big bands to choose from. Last year Herlin Riley got sick so he called me to sub for him on a seven-week tour with Wynton, with no rehearsal. All of the homework, practicing, and the musical situations I've done helped me be prepared.

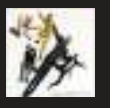
MD: When I saw you with Bob Hurst at the Jazz Gallery, your soloing was amazing, the way you broke up the phrasing as you referred to the melody.

Ali: I take a theme and just work it around over the form. There are many different ways to do it. I may have taken a theme and worked it around different parts of the beat, or started phrases at unusual places. Maybe I took a four-bar phrase, and phrased it beginning on beat 2, or the "&" of 2 or 3. People think it's complex, but at the root it's simple. I may do something contradictory to what is happening, but I always keep the form.

I played with Steve Coleman for a spell. We would have cycles inside of cycles that would overlap. But once you understand the big picture, it all makes sense.







Jackson Tracks

Recordings

Artist	Album
Russell Gunn	Gunn Fu
Ali Jackson	Groove@jazz En Tete
Craig Handy	Reflections In Change
Craig Handy	Flow
Marcus Roberts	Blues For The New Millennium
Dee Dee Bridgewater	Live At Yoshi's
Buster Williams	Joined At The Hip
Rodney Kendrick	Last Chance For Common Sense

Favorites

Artist	Recording	Drummer
Max Roach/ Clifford Brown	Live At The Beehive	Max Roach
Count Basie	Live At Newport	Jo Jones
Wilbur Harden	Tanganyika Strut	Art Taylor
Thelonious Monk	Criss-Cross	Frankie Dunlop
Thelonious Monk	Monk's Dream	Frankie Dunlop
Thelonious Monk	Monk In Tokyo	Frankie Dunlop
Miles Davis	Four And More	Tony Williams
Wynton Marsalis	Black Codes From The Underground	Jeff "Tain" Watts
Brandford Marsalis	Crazy People Music	Jeff "Tain" Watts
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones

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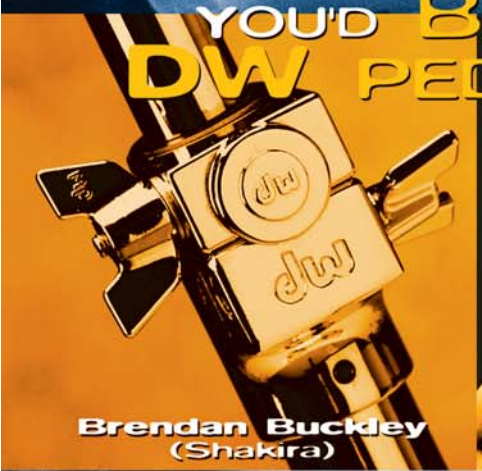

Brendan Buckley (Shakira)
Julio Figueroa (Joan Sebastian)
Waldo Madera* (Ricky Martin)
Mauricio Claveria (La Ley)
Alex Gonzalez (Mana)
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MD Visits Yamaha Japan

Corporate Mentality? Hah!

by T. Bruce Wittet

Motorcycles, guitars, pianos, band instruments, kitchen appliances, skis...Yamaha probably even manufactures a thing or two you don't *want* to hear about. It might taint your perception of the well-made, fine-sounding drums for which the company is known.

I recently undertook a mission for *Modern Drummer*, as the only journalist accompanying a group of drum-shop owners on a trip to Yamaha's operations in Japan. Before I departed, I was aware that some drummers perceive Yamaha as a faceless corporate conglomerate churning out instruments on vast assembly lines. This is the stuff of chat rooms—the lonely hearts of the Internet piping up against a Japanese company threatening the sanctity of American-made gear.

Perhaps because of my friendship with Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara, Yamaha's guru designer, and my relationship with drum marketing manager Jerry Andreas, I wasn't buying the gloomy story. For five years, Jerry had told me, "We've got to get you over to Japan; you won't believe it!"

When the call came to join Jerry, drum product manager Dave Jewell, and the dealers for a visit to the Yamaha drum factory in Osaka, I was ready to investigate. Quality and sound were never issues for me. The drums have always been beyond reproach in those departments. But I had to admit that what I'd heard from Yamaha about some small, homey factory seemed a little implausible. Soon I would get down and dirty on the factory floor and see for myself the truth about Yamaha drums.

Let's skip the torturously long plane trip across the Pacific. We were met at the airport and accompanied on the ultra-swift Bullet Train by Yamaha employees Morihiko Yasuda and Kengo Ooyama.

These two unpretentious buildings in Osaka are the birth place of Yamaha's professional drums.

1. Mrs. Akiko Nakata and her son Eizo run the factory. **2.** These molds are used to make Yamaha's unique Air Seal drumshells. **3.** Eizo Nakata hand-crafts a bearing edge. **4.** All drilling and fitting of shells is done by skilled technicians. Here, a worker carefully presses in an air-hole grommet.

Yamaha's Percussive Plethora

Yamaha is well known for the variety of percussion instruments that they offer. In drumkits alone, their wide selection of drumshell materials sets them apart from most other major manufacturers. Here's a quick overview of the company's extensive product line.

Recording Custom Drumkits

These are the drums that put Yamaha on the map twenty-five years ago. Recording Custom drums produce a focused sound by means of thick 6-ply birch tom shells and 7-ply bass drums made using the Air Seal system (as all Yamaha drumshells are made). YESS mounts are standard, as are long lugs that span the width of the shell. Available in classic piano finishes. Made in Japan.

Birch Custom Absolute Drumkits

Birch Custom drums retain the focused quality of the Recording Custom, but with thinner-walled shells that provide a more open sound characterized by attack and low-frequency response. YESS mounts and small lugs are standard. Made in Japan.

Maple Custom Drumkits

Yamaha's first foray into the world of maple drumsets, the Maple Custom has thick 7-ply shells (10-ply bass drums) that produce a round, balanced sound that projects. The drums are distinguished by square gold lugs, YESS nodal tom brackets and floor-tom leg mounts, and distinctive gloss and Vintage finishes. Yamaha's ball mount/clamp tom holder is standard with this and all the kits below. Made in Japan.

Maple Custom Absolute Drumkits

Ambient-sounding drums rich in all frequencies, the Maple Custom Absolutes feature thin 6-ply tom shells and 7-ply bass drums. The lugs are small and rounded and contain tension inserts to reduce rod slippage. Toms are fitted with YESS mounts. Kits are available in gloss, Vintage, and lacquer sparkle finishes. Made in Japan.

Maple Custom Absolute

Beech Custom Absolute Drumkits

New bullet-style lugs and revamped 6-ply toms/8-ply bass drums enhance the resonance of these drums, which are said to offer a unique palette of mids and lows. Toms feature YESS mounts. Made in Japan.

Beech Custom Absolute

Oak Custom Drumkits

This new line features thin, hard shells that promote optimum attack and aggressive tone for a very distinctive sound. Hardware fittings include new small lugs and YESS mounts. The drums are offered in a new range of matt and gloss finishes. Made in Japan.

Stage Custom Advantage And Standard Drumkits

Stage Custom drums feature Birch and Philippine mahogany shells (with a falkata finishing ply on the Stage Custom Advantage). The Advantage bass drum is 9-ply, otherwise all drums feature 8-ply construction. Kits come with YESS mounts and a pro ball/clamp tom holder. Advantage kits come with a wood snare, Standard kits have metal snares. The drums offer a good blend of frequencies. Made in Indonesia.

Stage Custom Advantage

YD Series Drumkits

The YD series offers entry-level drums with 9-ply Philippine mahogany shells. Wood-shell snare drums and pro-style tom mounts are standard. Made in Indonesia.

Compact Drumkits

Compact and specialty kits from Yamaha include the original Rick Marotta Hipgig, as well as two spin-offs from that design: the Manu Katche Junior Kit and the Al Foster Hipgig Sr. For standup players, there's the Steve Jordan Cocktail kit, which features a satellite snare. Made in Japan.

Snare Drums

Yamaha offers an extensive line of snare drums in a variety of materials, thicknesses, and diameters. These include drums made of birch, maple, beech, brass, copper, steel, bamboo, oak, and FRP synthetic fiber. Signature snares include models designed with, and named for, Akira Jimbo, Elvin Jones, Steve Gadd, JR Robinson, Steve Jordan, Peter Erskine, Billy Cobham, Sonny Emory, and Anton Fig. Made in Japan.

Akira Jimbo Signature snare drum

Hardware

In addition to the hardware that accompanies all drumkit configurations, Yamaha has several innovative stand-alone products. These include the HS1000 and HS1100 hi-hats, and the recently introduced Flying Dragon series of bass drum pedals.

Flying Dragon pedal

Marching and Orchestral Percussion

Yamaha's Field Corps Line includes the Sfz Snare Drum, along with high-tension marching snares, marching tenors, and bass drums. In addition, the company offers a complete orchestral percussion series, including symphonic snare drums, concert bass drums, mallet keyboards, and timpani. All are produced at Yamaha factories in Japan.

Field Corps marching drums

Concert timpani

Electronics

The DTXTREME and the DTX-PRESS are the electronic drumset entries from Yamaha. Both kits feature extensive sound libraries, editing and sequencing, multiple zone real-feel drum and cymbal pads, one-cable communication with computers, "Groove Check," and quiet practice capability. Sound modules are made in Japan; racks and pads are made in Indonesia.

DTXPRESS electronic kit

Accessories

Yamaha accessory instruments include the Russ Miller Groove Wedge (which promotes a sharp cross-stick sound) and Alex Acuña mounted Tamboritos (which include mutable jingles and adjustable snares). Alex also gives his name to wood timbales. These instruments are made in Japan.

Tour Master cymbal bags

Yamaha USA also markets Tour Master soft gig bags with wheels, special handles, and unique features. The bags are made in China.

www.yamaha.com.

As darkness (and our eyelids) fell, I remember breezing past the Osaka town center, curiously decorated with an enormous red Ferris wheel. Before bedding down, I opened the hotel curtains on a neon-lit city that very nearly dwarfs Manhattan.

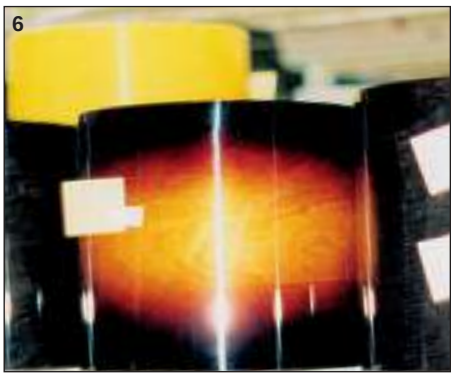
The next day, "Mori" and "Ken" arrived with Hagi, and we all boarded a train for the suburbs. We walked the last several hundred yards, past residences, stores, and intricate gardens. I paused at a cemetery, where weathered stones dated back hundreds of years.

After crossing a bridge over a small waterway, Morihiko directed our attention ahead. "There's Yamaha," he said. Before us were two squat buildings, separated by an alley lined with bicycles.

"*That's* Yamaha?" I inquired in disbelief. The factory bore a closer resemblance to a muffler service center. I spoke into my mini disc recorder, "People are *not* going to believe this!"

Through the Doors

In a city virtually defined by neon, no Yamaha marquee stood proud above the factory. In fact, at the entrance are the words "Sakae Rhythm." Once upon a time, that company manufactured a modest line of drums in Japan. When Yamaha moved in, decades ago, things changed from the shells right down to nuts and bolts. But the honorable moniker was left intact. Why paper over a proud heritage? And besides, "Sakae" is the Japanese word for prosperity.



5. & **6**. Shell finishing, before…and after. **7**. Yamaha "drum guru" Takashi "Hagi" "Hagiwara checks the assembly of a snare drum. **8**. Yamaha makes timpani in another small factory not far from the drumset operation. Professional metal snare drums are also made there.

A Yamaha visit begins with greetings from Mrs. Akiko Nakata (president of Sakae Rhythm) and her son Eizo, who run the factory. Their warmth is something I will never forget. (And their catered lunches were exquisite.)

On the second floor is a narrow boardroom, transformed into what I immediately

dubbed the "Yamaha shrine." Prominent are framed photos of the late Steve Ettleson (a long-time Yamaha employee), Cozy Powell, Steve Gadd, Earl Palmer, Dave Weckl, Roy Haynes, Al Foster, JR Robinson, Akira Jimbo, and a host of other famous Yamaha endorsers. The room was thick with drumming history.

Okay, the *talk* was there. What about the *walk*?

Shells From Scratch

At Yamaha, they make drumshells the old-fashioned way, hand-lapping ply after ply of wood. And for visitors such as ourselves, there was no better way to illustrate this than to have us build a snare drum.

Decision time. Should my drumshell be maple, birch, beech, or oak? I went with birch, an indigenous Japanese wood that figured in the success of the Recording Custom series. Yamaha also uses Asian beech and oak, whereas maple plies—not complete shells—are imported from America. (I later fell in love with the sizzling ambience of beech snares constructed by others on the tour.)

First I picked an attractive outer layer. Then I began running the plies, two at a time, through the glue machine, which resembled a large ringer washing machine. Hagi pointed out that the environmentally friendly glue is refreshed every two hours. "You can't use the same glue until six at night," he scoffed. "That's nonsense."

Once the plies were damp with glue, I tamped them into a metal mold. The trick is to seat them (with the aid of a large hammer) without damaging them, all the while maintaining the alignment of staggered diagonal seams—a key to the strength of Yamaha shells. When I found myself in trouble with a couple of plies that refused to behave, one of the Yamaha workers smiled and gave a knowing tap of the hammer.

Next I was shown how to connect the hose that allows Yamaha's Air Seal system to do its thing. Air rushes in at high pressure, sealing the newborn shell. When I removed the cylinder, it seemed the real deal to me, yet there was another step in the curing process: microwaving.

All Yamaha shells, from mighty concert bass drums to piccolo snares, go through the same hand-molding process. No robotic arms. No speeding assembly line. So *that* myth was dispelled.

Over that day and the next, I made the rounds with my snare shell. One technician showed me how to cut snare beds with a hand-guided machine. I had decided on the widest and deepest bed that Yamaha offers, in order to properly seat a 30-strand snare unit in a suitable "trench." One slip at this stage would cause a snare drum to lose its sensitivity. Such a shell would be discarded.

Scratchless Shells

My creation was starting to look like a snare drum. At this point, I carried it across the alley to the room in which Yamaha's Vintage Finish is applied. This finish is borrowed from the company's violin and woodwind divisions. It is Hagi's favorite, owing to its acoustical properties and the fact that it seals a drum without choking it.

During my visit I applied two coats of the finish by hand, using rags. Had I been able to stay longer, I would have applied four more coats, as is standard. You can't just heap them on; time has to elapse. Nowhere is this more evident than with Yamaha's famed "piano finishes." After the worker sprays one coat, he leaves the shell until the next day. The only way to achieve a hard, glossy finish, without eventual "crazing" or clouding, is to patiently apply thin coats, sanding between each one. There was no "quick drying" system in place during my visit, but several months later Yamaha's first ultra-violet light was put into service, enabling speedy curing of coats and multiple applications of lacquers within a single day.

Shells are drilled for lugs and other fittings on a series of electric presses. When it came to assembling the finished drums, I finally *did* discover an assembly line—sort of. Upstairs in one of the buildings, workers armed with electric drills and hand tools gathered around a couple of 20'-long plywood tables, applying logo badges, attaching lugs, and fitting YESS resonance enhancing mounts onto toms. At the head of one table, I attached my strainer and snare strands. (I was humbled by the woman next to me, who, although cheerful and talkative, could obviously do this in her sleep.) Later, I was relieved when Hagi gave my drum a thumbs up for integrity and alignment.

During the Yamaha visit, our group was given free run of the factory. I'd sneak up

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the back stairs and check out finished shells for the Marotta Hipgig, the Jordan Cocktail Kit, and the various Maple, Birch, and Beech Custom Absolutes. I'd spy snare drums, marching bass drums, Alex Acuña timbales—the works. The entire catalog of Yamaha high-end drums lay before me in various stages of assembly.

At one point, Hagi took us on a twenty-minute car ride to an even smaller building where they make Yamaha timpani. Now *this* was an experience. Each timp is carefully drawn out and tooled on a special lathe. Magically, a perfectly round timpani "blossoms" into a bowl from a copper sheet that was once as flat as a pancake. The words "spun shell" finally meant something to me.

Because of Yamaha's policy of sharing resources, technicians also spin brass and copper snare drum shells in the timpani factory. The significance of this is that the drums come out perfectly seamless. I dangled a copper snare shell and struck it with my finger: It resonated like a bell.

My Name In The Shrine

As is the custom, before going home each of us signed a piece of drumshell, to be placed in the tiny boardroom "shrine" alongside those inscribed by Erskine, Gadd, Foster, Jones, Powell, Jimbo, Weckl, and a legion of Yamaha players. I was humbled again.

On the day we left, a gentle rain was falling. At the doorway, I noticed a chain-like structure winding down from the roof, consisting of a series of "cups," like the petals of a flower. The rain started its journey from the roof, dripping into the first vessel, then the second, and so on until it reached the ground. To me, these "downspouts" symbolized the simplicity with which Yamaha builds drums, one step at a time, according to age-old, natural processes.

You Want Modern?

Due to airline delays and a thunderstorm in the Midwest at the start of our Asian journey, a couple of us missed out on a visit to Yamaha's Indonesia factory, where the manufacturer's Stage Custom drums and all their hardware are made. Yamaha's move to Indonesia is not a come-lately ploy to take advantage of low-price labor. The company has been an integral part of the Jakarta community since the late 1980s, building motorcycles, guitars, drums, and hardware. From the glowing stories of the drumshop owners who joined us later in Japan, it was obvious that we had missed a fascinating trip.

Rob Birenbaum (owner of Drum Headquarters in Saint Louis, Missouri) told me he did a little digging. He learned that Yamaha workers were well paid in relation to their community counterparts. They enjoyed excellent working conditions, and morale was good. Rob saw those workers scrutinizing the smallest of metal parts, thrice polishing even wing nuts. He witnessed the same metal going into motorcycle headers and bass-drum foot pedals. Top-notch quality control was in evidence everywhere.

Revelations

There's no question that Yamaha is a huge company. Its effectiveness, though, lies in its differentiation into smaller enterprises that share resources and expertise. At a moment's notice it can mobilize knowledge ranging from acoustics to metal stress.

My perception of Yamaha drums changed indelibly during my visit to Japan. Yamaha's top lines are assembled entirely in that country. The rest are built in Indonesia to the same rigid standards, including shells made with the Air Seal system. Unlike some other companies, Yamaha "sends out" for nothing—not shells, not hardware, not tension rods, not even drumkeys.

I never caught a whiff of that "cold, corporate Yamaha attitude" that I'd read about on the Internet. On the contrary, the whole scenario reminded me, ironically, of "boutique drum builders." The only difference is that instead of turning out high-end drums with a human touch in small factories across America, Yamaha is doing it in Osaka.

You'll have to wait for another story to hear about my marathon conversation with Hagi on the Bullet Train. He revealed thoughts on drums that he's been harboring since he worked for eight cents a day tuning ukuleles as a youth. Suffice it to say, Hagi is, in a very real sense, the driving force behind Yamaha drums as we know them. He confided to me, "You know, I have no wish to build the Rolls Royce of drums that no one can afford to play. But I do like Mercedes quality…."

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Whitney Nesting Penguin Drumsets And Wood Hoops

Wood hoops are now an option on Whitney Drums' Nesting Penguin line of kits based on 16", 18", or 20" bass drums. By "nesting" the high tom inside the low tom and the toms and snare inside the bass drum, a drummer can carry a four-piece kit in one bag weighing under 40 lbs. Two new versions of the Egg-Basket stand are now offered: the LT (pictured) and the HD. These all-on-one systems include mounts for all four drums and two cymbals. List prices for wood-hoop Nesting kits range from $2,984 to $3,184 and include padded gig bags. **(805) 452-4163, www.whitneydrums.com.**

Dishing The Dirt

Sabian HHX Evolution Mini Chinese

The 14" HHX Evolution Mini Chinese is the latest model in Sabian's HHX Series. This extra-thin, brilliant-finish model is said to respond "with a fast, explosive attack, a dirty low-end roar, and a controlled rate of decay." A high-profile shape makes the new model suitable for playing on its own or for stacking atop another cymbal "to create a gated, trashy 'bark.'" The heavily hammered surface of the Mini Chinese is topped with a small, raw bell.

The Mini Chinese was developed in response to Dave Weckl's request for a small Chinese model that would stack atop his 18" Evolution Crash. The cymbal is hand crafted from Sabian B20 bronze, and comes with the company's two-year warranty. Y **(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.**

Fastest Jingles In The West

Pearl Quick Draw Tambourine

Pearl's new percussion line offers a tambourine designed for the working percussionist or drumset player. The PTM10GH ($45) utilizes a unique mount that facilitates rapid deployment for hand playing—or you can drop it back into the mount for stick and hand accents. The new tambourine can be mounted on any standard hardware using Pearl's PP-37 Adjustable Holder ($39). Y **(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.**

A Solid Foundation

Roc-n-Soc Gas Motion Throne

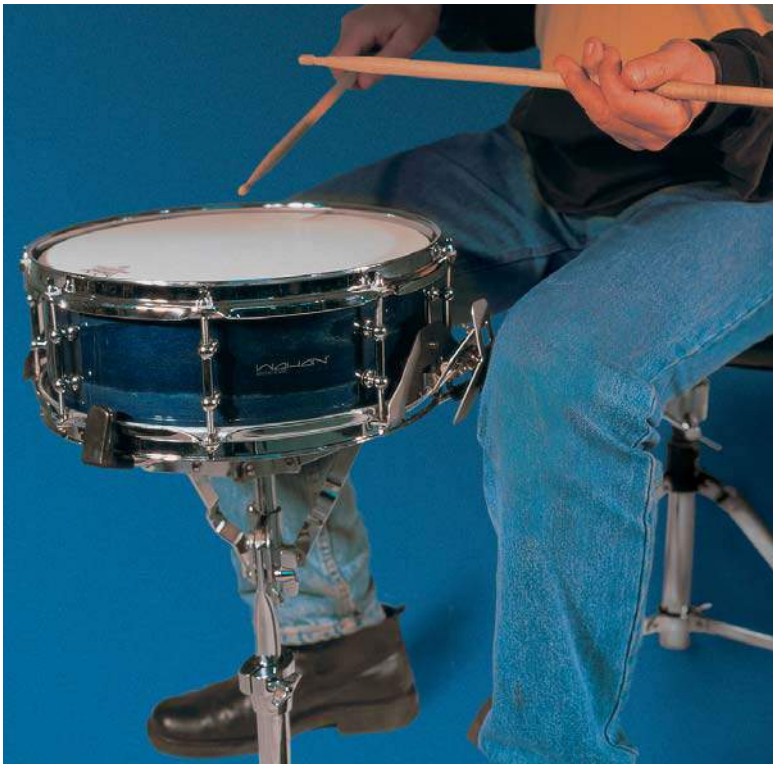
The Gas Motion Throne (GMT) from Roc-n-Soc combines popular features of several other models. With a five-spring rocker box that permits forward motion, the Motion Throne offers support for the lower back—said to reduce stress and fatigue on the back and legs up to 75%. The new gas-shock height control makes comfort adjustment quick and easy. Suggested list price is $299.95. A protective travel case will be available at extra cost. Y **(828) 452-1736, www.rocnsoc.com.**

Need A Lift?

Wahan Drums And Vario Lifter

German drummer/designer Willy Cherbettcian has been concerned with improving drum design since 1958. As a professional musician, he wanted to get the maximum from his drums. This desire resulted in the Wahan Drum Technology line of drums. Production includes full drumsets in several sizes and configurations, along with metal and wood snare drums. All shells are custom-manufactured in Germany to very precise specifications.

One new effect specially designed for snare drums is called the Vario Lifter. An assembly on the outside of the shell provides the drummer with immediate access to the various tones created between snare and tom or timbales effects by momentarily adjusting the snares. The Vario Lifter is also said to prevent unnecessary muffling of the drumshell and thus improve its resonating properties. Y **011-49-6134-286522, www.wahan.de.**



Looks Like Rubber, Sounds Like Bronze

Pintech Zenbal

A strong demand for authentic-looking and -feeling electronic cymbals has resulted in the new 14" swinging Zenbal from Pintech. The Zenbal is easily mountable on traditional cymbal stands and booms, and has a rubber-coated playing surface to reduce external stick noise (so only the desired electronic sound is heard).

Two models of Zenbals are available: single-zone and dual-zone. The dual-zone Zenbal ZB2 has two distinct playing surfaces: the "bell" and the edge, "with no possibility for crosstalk," according to Pintech. All popular membrane-supporting trigger modules are compatible with both single- and dual-zone Zenbals, which come with a lifetime warranty. Y **(864) 288-1500, www.edrums.com.**

Stick It In Your Ear

Westone In-Ear Monitoring

Westone Laboratories is offering two new lines of in-ear monitors designed to address the needs of all musicians. The Elite Series line of custom-fit products features the ES1 single-driver ($375) and ES2 dual-driver ($650) units. The Universal Series line of universal-fit products features the UM1 single-driver unit. The dual-driver UM2 is scheduled for introduction in early 2003.

Westone can also provide additional customization of Elite Series monitors—color, finish, and even shape—for a small additional charge. All custom-fit monitors require impressions of the user's ears to be taken by a hearing healthcare professional. (Westone provides a searchable nationwide list of such professionals on their Web site.)

The universal-fit UM1 single-driver unit is designed to provide high-quality in-ear sound to musicians on a budget. The UM1 is compatible with all dedicated in-ear monitor systems and headphone distribution amplifiers currently available, along with personal audio devices such as MP3 and CD players, and even laptop computers. The UM1 is offered in clear, beige, brown, and black, and is currently available online from Westone for $99 plus shipping and handling.

The Westone Music Products Web site also provides information on how to get started with in-ear monitoring, including the opportunity to ask questions of Westone's in-ear experts via email.

Y **(800) 525-5071,**
www.westone.com/music.

Beats As Treats

Carmine Appice's Realistic Rock For Kids

Realistic Rock For Kids (My 1st Rock & Roll Drum Method) is a book/CD package by Carmine Appice that teaches children the basics of playing the drumset in a kid-friendly fashion. Right from the start, youngsters are introduced to quarter- and 8th-note grooves, drum fills, and drum solos.

Realistic Rock For Kids combines a cheerful animated Carmine character with live performance photos of Appice to capture and hold the attention of kids. The two included CDs cover everything a beginner needs to know, from how to hold the sticks to how to play along with the songs. The package is narrated by Appice, and is appropriate for all age groups, regardless of reading level. Once all the lessons have been learned, the new young drummer is rewarded with a "Certificate Of Achievement" that is included with the book. Suggested retail price is $12.95. Y **(800) 327-7643,**
www.warnerbrospublications.com.

Hearing Aids

Peavey PVM 300 Drum Mic's

Peavey's PVM 300 series of drum mic's includes the 321 bass drum mic' ($139.99), the 325 snare mic' ($119.99), and the 328 tom mic' ($119.99). Each dynamic, super-cardioid model is frequency-tailored for excellent sound reproduction on the drum for which it is intended. All mic's include a 20' cable and carrying case. The 325 and 328 models include a 90° XLR cable connector and drum-mount clip.

For those interested in microphone pre-packs, Peavey's PVM DMS-5 system includes one 321, one 325, three 328s, four drum-mount clips, four mic' cables with 90° XLR connectors, and one cable with a straight XLR connector. It's priced at $499.99. Y **(601) 486-1865,** **www.peavey.com.**

And What's More

PEAVEY's International Series II is a five-piece entry-level kit complete with double-braced stands, cymbals, new telescoping drum spurs, drumsticks, and a drumkey. A step up from the original International Series, the kits feature a new lug design, an eight-lug snare drum, 7/8" tom arms, and a clamp-style seat on the included drum throne. Finishes available include Black, Metallic Wine Red, Metallic Silver, Metallic Dark Green, Metallic Claret, and Deep Ocean. Kits are priced at $699.99. Y **(601) 486-1414, www.peavey.com.**

SOUNDSEAT's new BreakDown Seat is made with the touring musician in mind. It features all the same high-quality, heavy-duty components that SoundSeat is known for, with the added benefit of fully breaking down and fitting in its own carrying bag for easy transport. Y **(704) 636-3560, www.soundseat.com.**

The 2003 **DRUM PEOPLE** calendar is now available. It features high-quality black & white photos of Thomas Lang, Zoro, Nick D'Virgilio, JR Robinson, Luis Conte, Bertram Engel, Bernard Purdie, Hakim Ludin, Mitch Dorge, Ndugu Chancler, and many more top drummers. Calendars can be ordered online for approximately $20 US (including shipping). **www.drumpeople.de.**

Drum Tuner from **MAESTRO INNOVATIONS** is a CD specifically designed to help drummers tune their drums. It provides recorded demos of well-tuned drums, then isolates the tunings of the top and bottom heads so the listener can hear exactly how they are tuned. The CD covers a wide range of drum sizes for toms, bass drums, and snare drums. Easy-to-follow instructions and additional tuning tips are also included. List price is $19.99. Y **(416) 990-7593, www.drumtuner.com.**

LATIN PERCUSSION's line of LP RhythMix kids' percussion has been redesigned for increased durability and enhanced sound. All four drums feature new multicultural graphics and brightly colored rims. The line includes a Native American–style tom-tom ($39.99), a kid-size conga ($34.99), mini-bongos ($34.99), and a frame drum ($19.99). Y **(973) 478-6903, www.lprhythmix.com.**

Bobby Rock's *The Zen Of Drumming* is now available from **WARNER BROS.** in DVD format. The three-hour-plus DVD features playing tips, solo performances, nutritional advice, and Bobby's philosophy for getting "in the zone" for great performances. Also from Warner Bros. is a new edition of Jim Chapin's classic *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer* (known to the drumming world simply as "The Chapin Book"). For the first time ever, the book includes two CDs featuring Jim himself playing the exercises. List price is $24.95. Y **(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.**

HUDSON MUSIC has released four of its most popular drum video titles in the DVD format. Each disc includes bonus clips, new footage, photo galleries, and other new features. Titles include *Making Music With Carter Beauford* ($29.95), *Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles Volume 2* ($29.95), *Buddy Rich At The Top* ($29.95), and *Snare Drum Basics* ($14.95). **www.hudsonmusic.com.**

From now until the end of the year (December 31, 2002), anyone purchasing a five-piece **PEARL** Export kit will receive a free tom and its mounting hardware—instantly creating a six-piece kit. Look for the display at your dealer or go to www.pearldrum.com for details.

Speaking of free, Pearl is now shipping all Eliminator double and single pedals with a free Carrying Bag. The heavy-duty nylon bags feature steel-reinforced and padded frames (to keep the bags rigid and provide superior protection for all contents), molded nylon handles, and adjustable/removable shoulder straps. Ample pockets inside and out accommodate beaters, drumkeys, and other miscellaneous items. The double-pedal Carrying Bag features a padded diagonal divider to separate and protect the pedals during transport. Y **(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.**

UNIGRIP now offers their L-Groovers drumstick series in hickory. The series features a unique contoured grip for greater holding security and comfort. Hickory L-Groovers come in the Dipstick and Soft Grip models, in sizes 5A, 5B, and 2B. Suggested retail price is $13.95. Y **(800) 474-7068, www.unigrip2000.com.**

MEINL's new Plastic Guiro is precision-molded from high-strength plastic. It features three different striking zones and rubber-ringed grip holes for maximum comfort and control. The Plastic Guiro has a slightly warmer and dryer sound than Meinl's Fiberglass model, yet is brighter and louder than a natural gourd guiro. Every guiro includes a wood and plastic striker and is available in black only.
Y **(877) 886-3465, www.meinl.de.**

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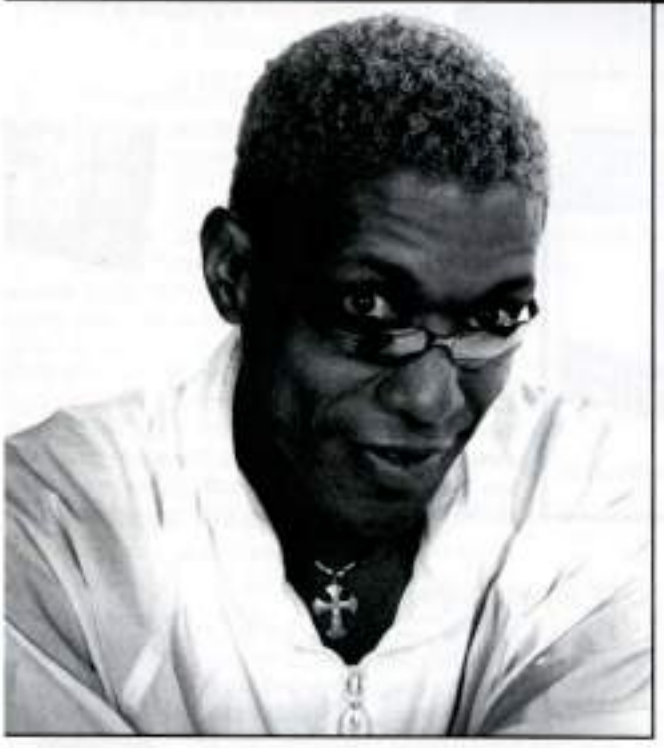

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RECORDINGS

rating scale poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 classic

9 Terri Lyne Carrington Jazz Is A Spirit (ACT)

Once the *enfant terrible* of straight-ahead jazz, **TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON** is now one of the art form's most overlooked major talents. On this adventurous, exotic record, featuring **Herbie Hancock**, **Gary Thomas**, and **Bob Hurst**, Carrington pushes the edge while absolutely swinging her butt off. Most indebted to Jack DeJohnette, Carrington's drumming is dynamic, deep, earthy, and surprising, as are her tunes. With a wide-ranging cast, Carrington is free to gallop, but she plays just what the music demands, which is often considerable. A four-

7 Derek Trucks Band Joyful Noise (Columbia)

On *Joyful Noise*, Derek Trucks, the nephew of Allman Brothers drummer Butch Trucks, shows an almost spiritual affinity for many musical styles. Here the guitarist takes the Allmans' exploratory concept one step further, bringing in guest vocalists such as soul legend **Solomon Burke**, Latin star **Rubén Blades**, Pakistani singer **Rahat Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan**, and Trucks' wife, blues guitarist/singer **Susan Tedeschi**. Drummer **YONRICO SCOTT** displays a loose, jazzy style that flows smoothly over each of the musical journeys. His is not a defined style, but rather a homogeneous, chameleon-like adaptation that fits well with this

7 California Guitar Trio With Tony Levin And Pat Mastelotto (Inside Out)

California Guitar Trio navigate umpteen textures and styles here, giving **PAT MASTELOTTO** plenty of room to kick up his multi-talented arsenal. Mastelotto's full-frontal tom assault on Yes's "Heart Of The Sunrise" is a pure rhythmic earthquake, and his solo in Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Dance Of Maya" is downright brutal. But he shines throughout the album in subtle, surprising ways. Sideways bop and drum thwacks fill one song, hand drums and swishing sounds fill another, while Bulgarian/Klezmer rhythms and sequenced alien grooves explode elsewhere. This is an excellent showcase for Mastelotto, but any drummer would love to groove over CGT's expansive styles and intricate

8 Jughead Jughead (InsideOutMusic)

This CD is going to make me lose my hearing, since I can't help but crank up the catchy melodic punk/pop tunes that Jughead puts out. With a bashing surf-punk vibe, **GREGG BISSONETTE** proves he truly cares about the music, never taking his overqualified chops beyond what the songs cry out for. Solid grooves, strong hooks, and radio-friendly Beatle-esque vocals keep you coming back for more. With the extreme talents of **Ty Tabor** (King's X), **Derek Sherinian** (Planet X), and Gregg's brother **Matt Bissonette**, here's hoping this is one indie-label super-band project that stays together and tours. **Mike Haid**

7 Snapcase End Transmission (Victory)

Stellar production keeps this latest Snapcase release ahead of most of its peers. Everything about *End Transmission*'s mix—the drums in particular—gels extremely well, with the fine details always intact. There's just enough tom resonance, crash and hi-hat bleed, snare decay, and kick penetration to keep **TIM REDMOND**'s playing forceful and dynamic without sacrificing intensity when the stereo-panned high-gain guitars kick in; the oscillation between breakdowns and high-pressure slams in "Ten A.M." is a perfect example. Of course, the fact that Redmond is a fabulous studio drummer doesn't hurt either. **Waleed Rashidi**

WHAT IN THE WORLD

Music from Africa resonates with many drummers, both because of its rhythmic inventiveness and the significance that music of the African Diaspora has had on drumset. Nonesuch Records recently started re-issuing the landmark *Explorer Series*, a line of recordings originally released in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s that introduced many American listeners to "world music." The reissues will take three years and cover 92 discs from all over the world. The first batch is 13 discs from Africa, drawing on music from several countries, including Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Burundi, Kenya, and Mali. With bala and dzil (xylophones), inanga (zither), singing, flutes, oud, fiddles, and mbira (thumb piano), the discs give the lie to the notion that African music is only drumming (of which the series also has plenty). But just about all the music—ranging from field recordings to studio tracks—demonstrates the prevalence of African musical practices of polyrhythm, call-and-response, and offbeat phrasing. Of particular interest to drummers will be the two discs from Burkina Faso, *Savannah Rhythms* and *Rhythms Of The Grasslands*, a disc from Ghana called *Ancient Ceremonies: Dance Music And Songs*, and a disc from Burundi called *Music From The Heart Of Africa*, all of which have been unavailable on CD until now. All three countries have rich and varied drumming traditions. The bell patterns and talking drums from Burkina Faso and Ghana and the warrior drumming from Burundi, in particular, give set drummers and percussionists plenty of material for inspiration. **John Adamian**

PROG ROUNDUP

9 Spock's Beard *Snow* (Metal Blade)

If vocalist/keyboardist/songwriter Neal Morse is neo-prog's Brian Wilson, then *Snow* is Spock's Beard's *Pet Sounds*. A double-disc concept recording that travels through many interesting lyrical and musical journeys, this is the band's best effort to date. Drummer **NICK D'VIRGILIO** is stellar throughout. As the music evolves in many diverse directions, Nick adds an energy that doubles the intensity of each track. Damn, I wish these guys could get on the radio.

7 Ark *Burn The Sun* (Favored Nations)

This instrumentally thick recording kicks off with an intricate drumming intro from **JOHN MACALUSO**, letting you know up front that this stuff is heavy, and it's going to kick your butt. Macaluso really lays into this instrumentally intense music, with conviction and chops to match.

8 Porcupine Tree *In Absentia* (Lava)

One moment the chameleon-like Porcupine Tree sounds like guitar-heavy Zeppelin-esque rock, the next it's vocal harmony–laden pop-rock, and the next it's drifting in and out of ambient-meets-retro prog passages. A bit confusing, but altogether enjoyable. Drummer **GAVIN HARRISON** plays dynamically and tastefully through each of these stylistic changes, with some ear-catching chops.

Mike Haid

8 Anthony Braxton Quartet *8 Standards (Wesleyan) 2001*
8 Kevin Norton *Change Dance (Troubled Energy)*

(both Barking Hoop)

KEVIN NORTON is an enterprising and talented jazz drummer who not only actively plays the music he loves, but has been successfully running his own label, Barking Hoop Records, to promote it. Covering a live date at Wesleyan University, **Anthony Braxton**'s release features the avant-garde giant exploring standards rather than his own unique compositions. The music is engaging from the start, with interesting soloing and support from the group. Norton keeps things moving throughout, tastefully prodding and never overplaying.

Beginning in 5, Norton's own *Change Dance* features agitated rhythms emerging with long horn lines over the top. The music grows as the soloists explore, while the drummer keeps things stirred up. About two thirds of the way through, he builds a solo up from quiet shakers, gradually erupting over his kit. The accomplished playing of Norton's innovative composition results in an artistically rewarding album.

Martin Patmos

5 Pork Tornado *Pork Tornado* (Rykodisc)

Pork Tornado, anchored by Phish's **JON FISHMAN**, is a bar band, pure and simple. The quintet's famous drummer will sell records on name alone, but otherwise it's unclear exactly who this rather ordinary bunch of blues/country/rock tunes is aimed at. Worse, the LP's silly vibe feels like an in-joke that only the Porkers themselves will find funny. Though Fishman plays steady generic beats and uses brushes well, most of his ideas can be found paired with far more interesting music on the last few Phish records. Nothing much new here…guys, take your time with a follow-up.

Michael Parillo

6 Of Montreal *Aldhils Arboretum* (Kindercore)

As if from the rock 'n' roll graduating class of 1967, Of Montreal's blend of The Doors, Sgt. Pepper-era Beatles, and The Byrds' classic Rickenbacker-style guitar pickings is a distinct homage to the elements of the organ-laced period. The unabashedly retro drumming of **DEREK ALMSTEAD** and **JAMEY HUGGINS** is perfectly in step with the genre—simple two-beat passages, bouncy verse/chorus drives, and swinging tom/snare interactions, fully finessed by the classic sonics of non-resonant toms, floppy crashes, and pronounced ride pings. Such pristine emulation might even find John Densmore and Ringo Starr raising eyebrows.

6 The Synergy Quartet *Barcodes* (independent)

The listener is greeted with a seductive laid-back slink with the song "Prowl." This is the work of **DARREN KUPER**, whose tasteful skills command keen attention on Synergy Quartet's lite jazz/fusion. Kuper does a superb job navigating guitarist Mike Brannon's original compositions. I would suspect this is a critic/musician's band, not necessarily a crowd pleaser. But Kuper plays with conviction and heart that would make any Wertico or Weckl fan smile. Although the music might leave you unfulfilled funk-wise, it's a joy to hear a talented drummer lay it down.

(www.cdbaby.com/synergy)

Sean Enright

LIGHTING THE FUSE

8 Scott Henderson *Well To The Bone* (Shrapnel/Blues Bureau International)

Taking an old genre to new and interesting places is not an easy task. Guitarist Scott Henderson pulls off a collection of non-traditional blues with a sense of humor and some serious chops to sweeten the mix. Drummer (and Tribal Tech bandmate) **KIRK COVINGTON** sounds right at home slamming the phat-back blues with authority.

9 Dave Weckl Band *Perpetual Motion*

(Concord/Stretch)

Weckl has found his happy place with this band, recording, mixing, and producing his strongest musical effort to date. Always making the difficult sound easy, Weckl blazes through a collection of melodic funk, Latin, and world jazz on his percussion-enhanced kit. The addition of a first-call LA horn section adds an exciting kick to several tracks. Weckl's chops are energized, and the compositions are outstanding. 8

Frank Gambale/Stuart Hamm/Steve Smith *GHS 3* (Tone Center)

Yet another of **STEVE SMITH**'s creative outlets, GHS3 is full-tilt instrumental jazz/rock fusion in the spirit of the early-'70s masters. Smith explores interesting Indian rhythmic concepts on the composed drum piece "Culture Clash," but rock, funk, and jazz

BOOKS

In The Court Of King Crimson by Sid Smith (Helter Skelter)

level: all, £14.99

Quirky, insightful, and just plain fun, this is the most detailed look yet at King Crimson's history and music. Throughout, Smith confronts the dual tasks of analyzing recordings and illuminating the many characters who've worn the Crimson cloak over the years, such as the visionary Michael Giles, the manic Jamie Muir, and the mind-altering Bill Bruford. Smith digs deep with the zeal of a lifelong fan, but doesn't shy away from probing the causes of intra-band turmoil. (If you've suspected that Robert Fripp is hard to work with, it seems you're correct.) There's a full discography, including side (but not solo) endeavors. And in case you can't remember whether that '82 show in Asbury Park was in June or July, there's a complete "gigography." All that info, plus plenty of colorful quotes from just about everyone, makes this an essential resource for the true Crim-head. **Michael Parillo**

Jazz-Rock Fusion by Julie Coryell & Laura Friedman (Hal Leonard)

level: all, $27.95

When Coryell and Friedman released *Jazz-Rock Fusion* in 1978, it was a first look for many at some of the musical heroes included inside—Pastorius, Zawinul, Hancock, Airto, Walden, Abercrombie, Liebman, Corea, Breckers, Clarke, etc. In this reissue, nearly sixty seminal players are covered, divided into sections by instrument. For each musician, there's a biography, a brief one-on-one interview, and a cross-referenced discography. I gobbled up the original printing in 1978, and thumbing through this new version is like seeing an old friend. They've changed the look of it (Miles replaces Wayne Shorter on the new cover), but what's inside remains an informative, somewhat innocent history of an exciting era in music. **Robin Tolleson**

Drum Circle: A Guide To World Percussion

by Chalo Eduardo & Frank Kumor (Alfred)

level: all, $19.95 (with CD)

So, you've received a ganza for your birthday and you still wonder which end is up? *Drum Circle* is the book for you. Some books on ethnic percussion instruments are strong on cultural background, while others are very helpful on playing techniques and styles. Still others are most useful in presenting the traditional rhythmic patterns themselves. This richly detailed 75-page workbook combines all the above in one place. The authors, both experienced players, bandleaders, and educators, have put together the complete reference guide to the tooling, techniques, and rhythmic traditions of 28 instruments found on four continents. From hand drums, to bells, to frame drums, to berimbaus and cuicas, *Drum Circle* puts every reader in the know about the increasingly popular world of ethnic percussion. **Bill Kiely**

VIDEO

Brazilian Coordination For Drumset with Maria Martinez (Hal Leonard)

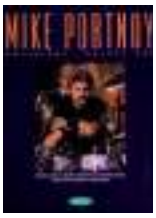
level: beginner to intermediate, $19.95 (video with booklet)

Drummer/educator Martinez has an enviable knack for uncluttered explanations. On this video she guides drummers step-by-step through Brazilian feels and patterns including bossa nova, samba, baiao, and partido alto. The numerous live band performances in a smooth Brazilian jazz style lack the excitement of many competitive videos, but they do provide good examples of groove applications. Players with a basic command of Brazilian styles may prefer to skip to Martinez' excellent book of the same title, which is packed with practical mix-and-match grooves. But beginners to the genre will find Martinez' video to be a helpful orientation to the book. **Jeff Potter**

Mike Portnoy Anthology, Volume One

transcribed by Steve Ferraro (Hudson Music)

level: intermediate to advanced, $24.95



If you're a Portnoy fan and have wanted to learn Mike's licks note-for-note, then this book will give you plenty to chew on. *Volume One* covers nine tracks, hand-picked by Portnoy from his work with Dream Theater, Liquid Tension Experiment, and Transatlantic. The book is well laid out and presented in chronological order, beginning with Dream Theater's "Pull Me Under" and closing with the 31-minute epic "All Of The Above" from TransAtlantic's *SMPT:E* recording. Steve Ferraro does a commendable job of transcribing Portnoy's technically demanding drum parts. Each song offers informative performance notes from Portnoy as well as insightful transcription notes from Ferraro. Since Mike changed drumkits with every project, the book also displays photos, kit diagrams, and notation keys for each song. Good luck finding all the drum gear to pull this off. **Mike Haid**

A New Way Of Groovin' by Ignacio Berroa (Carl Fischer)

level: advanced, $24.95 (with CD)

Ignacio invites us to superimpose the clave onto the jazz ride rhythm. It's a fun mind/limb exercise (and it could also be a metaphor for this artist's life). Students first play hand/foot jazz patterns, then drop the same patterns into a rumba clave. At first the transfer seems awkward, but eventually the ear grasps the connections and the student can better internalize alternating between 4/4 and 6/8. The two hot play-along tracks on the demo disc are a challenge. The book's not as immediately applicable as Berroa's previous *Groovin' In Clave,* but it's a captivating workout nonetheless. **Jeff Potter**

DVD

Classic Drum Solos, Vol. 2 (Hudson Music)

level: all, $29.95

Classic Drum Solos Volume 2 is filled with fun and inspiration for any drummer. There are some great moments here, like when **GENE KRUPA**'s band is "practicing" in a boiler room, only to have him solo on the pipes around the room. The **"PAPA" JO JONE**S piece from 1964 is simply beautiful to watch, as he uses his fingers, hands, and sticks in a sensitive, dynamic, and technically amazing solo. And speaking of technique, there are **BUDDY RICH** solos from 1970 and 1986. **ELVIN JONES**, **SHELLY MANNE**, **LOUIE BELLSON**, and others are featured in clips that make this a nice collection for any fan. **Martin Patmos**

To order any of the books or videos reviewed in this month's *Critique,* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call BooksNow at (800) BOOKS-NOW (266-5766) or surf to www.clicksmart.com/moderndrummer. (A handling charge may be added, according to product availability.)

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Happy Birthday, Elvin!

From left: Wynton Marsalis, Gerald Canon, and Elvin.

On Monday, September 9, jazz legend Elvin Jones joyously celebrated his seventh-fifth birthday at New York City's famous Blue Note nightclub. Guests included a bevy of notable drummers and members of the percussion industry. Entertainment was provided by Elvin himself, kicking off a week's engagement with a crack band. For this evening only, the band was joined by guest soloist Wynton Marsalis. The entire event was hosted by comedian and jazz aficionado Bill Cosby.

From left: Lenny White, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, and Michael Shrieve.

Bill Cosby

Cosby started the evening off on a light note when he said, "Elvin, you'd better enjoy your seventy-fifth birthday. On your eighty-fifth it's gonna be all ballads." Later, he observed, "When I first heard Elvin on Sonny Rollins' *Live At The Vanguard*, Elvin was playing all this stuff. I wondered whether or not he was bothering Sonny with all that racket."

Elvin himself displayed his uniquely swinging and passionate approach to playing the instrument. From the moment he sat down at the drums till the last note of the set, he created a feeling in the room that had everyone smiling. He showed, at turns, the fire and the gentleness in his playing that has kept him in the forefront of creative drumming decade after decade.

Elvin's band included Anthony Wilson on piano, Delfeayo Marsalis on trombone, Mark Schim and Pat LaBarbera on saxes, and Gerald Canon on bass. They performed tunes ranging from lush ballads to hard-swinging bop, with expert assistance from trumpet great Marsalis.

The party was attended by musicians and percussion-industry personalities who came from all over to pay tribute. Notable drummers included Jack DeJohnette, Mike Clark, Michael Shrieve (who joined in on drums for a swinging rendition of "Happy Birthday"), Tommy Igoe, Steve Jordan, Ed Bicknell and Brian Bennett (who came in from London), Horacee Arnold, and many others.

Percussion manufacturers with whom Elvin is associated—Yamaha, Zildjian, and Pro-Mark—were also well represented. Joe Testa (Yamaha) and Rab Zildjian awarded twelve hand-made drums and commemorative cymbals to special friends of Elvin on his behalf.

When Elvin spoke, he said that music is about helping us to enjoy all of the things in life that there are to enjoy. He held out his champagne glass, gave a rumbling chuckle, and added, "And there are a *lot* of things to enjoy." That seemed to sum up his approach to drumming, and to life. It was a night that neither Elvin, his wife, Keiko, nor anyone else who was there will soon forget.

Paul Siegel

Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum Show

On September 21, 2002, the city of Atlanta, Georgia experienced torrential rainstorms, city-wide power outages, severe flooding, and the 4th Annual Vintage & Custom Drum Show. Luckily, Mother Nature saved her fireworks for the early evening hours, so as not to dampen the spirits (or the heads) of the 250-plus attendees and twenty-seven exhibitors at this years show, held at the Atlanta Ramada Inn Conference Center.

1. This early-1970s white marine pearl Rogers kit is a Buddy Rich model owned by Alan Ramsay Jr. of Columbus, Georgia. Buddy originally ordered the kit when he endorsed Rogers drums, but he never took possession of it.

2. Also from the '70s is this blue oyster Ludwig Octa-Plus kit owned by Dean Embrich of New Jersey. This is the kit that set the stage for all "monster kits" that followed.

3. Studio great Craig Krampf conducted an insightful clinic.

4. Drum patriarch William F. Ludwig II celebrated his eighty-sixth birthday at the show, and was presented with an award recognizing his four straight years of attendance.

5. A small part of collector Richard Wheeler's array of snare drums.

Since 1999, Billy Jeansonne (of Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drums and *Vintage Drummer* magazine) has sponsored Atlanta's ever-expanding drum show. Besides the outrageous vintage and custom drums on display, this year's show featured other treats, including an insightful clinic from renowned session drummer Craig Krampf. In addition, William F. Ludwig II signed autographs, posed for photos, and shared stories of his many years as one of the world's leading drum manufacturers. Mr. Ludwig was honored with a plaque for his appearances at four consecutive Atlanta shows.

This was truly a drum collector's paradise, with classic Rogers and Slingerland kits on display, along with Ludwig Vistalite kits, the Hal Blaine-inspired Octa-Plus kit, and hundreds of vintage Ludwig snare drums dating back to the 1920s. Vintage exhibitors included Dean Embrich (New Jersey), Arnie Lang (New York), John Sheridan (New York), John Aldridge (Oklahoma), Mike Balkom (Virginia), and several dealers from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.

Contemporary manufacturers and custom builders showing their wares included Ludwig Industries, Maryland Drum Co., Lang Percussion, Aha Drums, Pork Pie Percussion, Craviotto Drums, and Orange County Drum & Percussion. There was also a cymbal display from Bosphorus Cymbals. Door prizes were offered by Ludwig and Craviotto.

If you're into the vintage drum scene, bring your items to sell or trade—along with your wallet (and an umbrella!)—to Atlanta next year. And plan to get there early so you can have time to check out the endless collection of vintage snare drums.

Mike Haid
Photos courtesy of Bruce Jeansonne

Chick Corea Reunion Concert

On August 28, 2002, Chick Corea reunited with his former Elektric Band and Three Quartets bandmates at the Hollywood Bowl. The all-star Three Quartets lineup included Eddie Gomez on bass, Michael Brecker on saxophone, vocalist Flora Purim, percussionist Airto Moreira, and (of course) Steve Gadd on drums. If the Hollywood Bowl had a roof, it surely would have been blown off by the mature, virtuosic musicianship displayed by all.

After a break and a set change, the familiar chords of the Elektric Band's aggressive fusion classic "Rumble" were played. The crowd applauded as if welcoming old friends: saxophonist Eric Marienthal, guitarist Frank Gambale, bassist John Patitucci, and drummer Dave Weckl. Dave's playing was energetic and characteristically precise, marked by an unusual, tangible glee. Along with the audience, Weckl was rediscovering the music that had made him a star. And, again like the audience, he couldn't contain the excitement stirred by this historic reunion.

Top: the Three Quartets lineup (from left): Chick Corea, Michael Brecker, Eddie Gomez, and Steve Gadd. Center: The Elektric Band (from left): Eric Marienthal, Corea, Frank Gambale, John Patitucci (behind Gambale), and Dave Weckl. Bottom: three percussion greats (from left) Airto, Steve Gadd, and Dave Weckl.

Zildjian Plays Host

Text and photos by Jon Thibault

Zildjian recently hosted the winners of their A Custom Sweepstakes, for which the prize was a visit to the company's

The grand prize winners of the A Custom Sweepstakes visit Zildjian and meet Vinnie Colaiuta. (From left): Zildjian president Craigie Zildjian, prizewinners Scott Hesler and John Montpetit, Vinnie, and prizewinner Ryan Myers.

Norwell, Massachusetts factory and a chance to meet Vinnie Colaiuta. The three grand-prize winners—John Montpetit, Ryan Myers, and Scott Hesler—were given a complete factory tour, followed by a "meet and greet" with Vinnie, along with

INDY QUICKIES

The third annual **Cape Breton International Drum Festival** will be held May 3 and 4, 2003, at The Savoy Theatre in Glace Bay, just outside of Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Canada. Each day's show will run from 12:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. Tickets are $50 for a two-day pass and $35 for a one-day pass, and are on sale now. Y **(902) 727-2337,** **www.cbdrumfest.com.**

The official **Art Blakey** Web site has been launched at **www.artblakey.com**. The site provides biographical information on Blakey, merchandise, and an extensive gallery.

The **Jasper Wood Products** company, long-time suppliers of drumshells to manufacturers like Gretsch and Fibes, recently closed its doors after more than seventy-five years in business. Speaking for the Gretsch company, Lena Thomas said, "We're sad to see Jasper close, but we will continue making shells to our spec formulas without interruption. Though we will miss our friends at Jasper, the Gretsch drumshell will stay the same." The Fibes company had no comment at this time.

The contributions of **Carlos "Patato" Valdéz** to the world of percussion and Latin jazz were recognized recently when the Heineken JazzFest 2002, held at the Tito Puente Amphitheater in San Juan, Puerto Rico, dedicated this year's festival in his honor. Patato has recorded and performed with such greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Mongo Santamaria, and Machito. During the late 1940s he helped develop the first tunable congas, and he has been a Latin Percussion endorser virtually since that company's inception. **www.lpmusic.com.**

Bosphorus Cymbals' new Web site at **www.bosphoruscymbals.com** provides a description of the company's hand-made cymbals, an artist roster, setups and news, and company history. According to Bosphorus's new director of sales & artist relations, Dwight Keith, "The site will soon include a once-a-month drum-chat with our endorsing artists, as well as streaming audio and video."

Drumtech, England's best-known drumming school, recently opened its new live performance room. The room has been equipped with Carlsboro PA and backline gear, as well as a full drumkit courtesy of longtime Drumtech supporters Yamaha and Zildjian. Drumtech will be building more classrooms and practice rooms over the coming months.

Y **(011) 44 208 749-3131,** **www.drum-tech.co.uk.**

The **Spirit Of The Arts Foundation** has launched a program called **"Drums Not Drugs."** The program offers presentations for drug prevention or drug recovery audiences, and addresses hard, designer, and over-the-counter drugs, as well as alcohol and nicotine. Drumming is stressed as an alternative to fill the void, ease the pain, and create a community in which young people can thrive. The presenters are master drummers, musicians, dancers, and teachers. The Foundation is seeking volunteers, board members, and sponsors for its many programs. Interested parties should call Sandy Mitchell at Y **(973) 875-2068** or email **sandy@spiritofthearts.org.**

Who's Playing What

Tomas Haake

New Vic Firth drumstick endorsers include **Tomas Haake** (Meshuggah), **Michael Bland**, **Adrian Ost** (Powerman 5000), **Tito Puente Jr.**, **Shannon Leto** (30 Seconds To Mars), **Luke Adams** (Peter Yorn), **Marcus Dahlstrom** (Blindside), **Jeremy Hummel** (Breaking Benjamin), **Michael Braun** (Hall & Oates), **Jason Schwartzman** (Phantom Planet), **Karen Teperberg** (Chris Botti), and **Dave Chavarri** and **Roger Vasquez** (Ill Nino).

Pearl Jam drummer **Matt Cameron** is playing Yamaha Birch Custom Absolute drums, along with new endorsers **Shannon**

Craigie and Debbie Zildjian and members of Zildjian's marketing and customer service departments. The remainder of their day was spent selecting cymbals and participating in a personal photograph and autograph session with Vinnie.

Along with their cymbal setups, Scott, Ryan, and John received thirty-six pairs of Zildjian drumsticks, $100 worth of assorted Zildjian Basics wearables, and the A Custom promo video featuring Vinnie. The contest also had twenty-five second-prize winners, each of whom received one new A Custom Fast crash cymbal, twelve pairs of drumsticks, $50 worth of assorted Zildjian Basics, and the A Custom promo video. Fifty third-prize winners were awarded six pairs of drumsticks and the A Custom promo video.

Zildjian also recently hosted the company's second artist session at Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) in New York City. The relaxed and informal gathering allowed artists a sneak preview of new Zildjian products. Along with key Zildjian personnel, nearly a hundred artists attended the session, traveling from as far as Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

Artists included: **Alex Alexander** (Dido), **Tony Beard**, **Larry Bright**, **Rocky Bryant**, **Sim Cain** (Henry Rollins Band), **Keith Carlock** (Steely Dan), **Eguie Castrillo** (Berklee College Of Music), **Vince Cherico** (Ray Baretto), **Mike Clark** (Headhunters), **Duduka Da**

Larkin and **Sully Erna** (Godsmack). Meanwhile, **Brian Ireland** (Something Corporate), **Gabe**

From Left to right; Brian Ireland, Gabe Mantle, George Schwindt, and Joe Sirois

Mantle (gob), **Joe Sirois** (Mighty Mighty Bosstones), and **George Schwindt** (Flogging Molly) all played Yamaha drums on the recent Vans Warped tour.

Funkmaster/author **Rick Latham** is now playing Istanbul Mehmet cymbals.

Ebenezer Da Silva (Patti LaBelle, Shakira) has joined the ranks of Meinl percussion endorsers. Playing Meinl cymbals are Dutch session drummer **Chris Strik**, **Norman Bonink** of Blof (Holland's hottest pop band), American metal drummer **Jason Bittner** (Shadows Fall), and **Jeff Mince** (Nina Hagen).

Dave Keel of punkers The Riddlin' Kids is a new Grover Custom drumkit endorser.

Drummers playing with Silver Fox drumsticks include **Steve Hollingworth** (5-Man Electrical Band), **Mike Arturi** (Lovin' Spoonful), **Gary Hopkins** (Blueline), **Alex Blane** (Dreaming Of The Fifth), **Josh Brewer** (Hogg Mountain Lugg Nuts), **Kyle Bassert** (Trailor), **Johnny Bird** (Nashville independent), **Dalls Cortland** (Thorazine), **Luke Garro** (independent), **Dustin Hengst** (Bleu), **Tony Mason** (Splendid Chaos), **Dave McMahan** (Clockwise), **Scott McPhail** (Gruvis Malt), **Jesse McVaney** (Doublethink), **Frank Picarazzi** (NYC independent), **Gary Staniar** (H Is Orange), **Adam Street** (Nightstorm DBC), and **Ian Rudderman** (independent).

Forrest Robinson (India.Arie) and **Mike Wengren** (Disturbed) are now Evans drumhead artists.

Goo Goo Dolls drummer **Mike Malinin** is using Sennheiser Evolution mic's on his touring kit.

Evan Stone (John Tesh Band, Salty The Pocketknife) has joined the Bosphorus Cymbals artist roster.

Drummers using Clark Synthesis Tactile Sound monitors attached to their drum thrones include **Tico Torres** (Bon Jovi), **Kenny Aronoff** (Melissa Etheridge), **Carter Beauford** (Dave Matthews Band), **Tré Cool** (Green Day), **David Silveria** (Korn), **Caroline Corr** (The Corrs), and **Michel Dorge** (Crash Test Dummies).

Neil Peart is endorsing Wuhan China cymbals.

DRUM KICKS

"These are my kids: Vinnie, Buddy, Weckl, and Gadd!!

QUICK BEATS

PJ McMULLAN
(3RD STRIKE)

What are some of your favorite grooves?
Danny Carey on the three-against-four bridge in the song "Eulogy" (Tool), Tim Alexander on "John The Fisherman" (Primus), Stephen Perkins on "Blood Rag" (Porno For Pyros), Amir "?uestlove" Thompson on "Without A Doubt" (The Roots), and Billy Martin on "The Lover" (Medeski Martin & Wood).

What do you listen to when you're driving?
There are *way* too many to list here, but several driving favorites would be Talvin Singh, Nine Inch Nails, Medeski Martin & Wood, Tool, Tosca, and Peter Gabriel.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?
Danny Carey, Tony Levin, Trent Reznor, The Edge, and Tom Morello.

What's the best thing about playing Ozzfest?
Getting to watch guys like Tomas Haake (Meshuggah) and Mike Bordin (Ozzy Osbourne) up close during their sets. It was like having my own personal drum clinic every day!

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"Fast Hands For Drummers" may be the only book you need to improve your snare drum **and** bass drum technique. To order, send $12 to: John Bock, 9 Hillview Place, Elmsford, NY 10523.

Hard-cover drum books by Joel Rothman. Complete Rock Drummer, Complete Jazz Drummer, $99.95 each. Send for catalog. J.R. Publications, c/o Charles Dumont & Son, #1085 Dumont Dr. Voorhees, NJ 08043. Tel: (800) 257-8283.

Instruction

NYC—Westchester. Learn the art of playing the drums. Students include platinum artists. All welcome. **"It's about time." Www.edbettinelli.com.** Tel: (212) 759-2631, (914) 674-4549.

Boston, Brockton, Norton, and Wrentham, MA, Providence, RI: Horrigan Drum School, all levels, all styles.Tel: (888) 258-0021.

Drumset lessons through the mail. For brochure, send $1 US to Horrigan Drum School, 342 Centre St., Brockton, MA 02302.

NYC—Tabla. Study Indian classical drumming with performer Misha Masud. All levels. Special training for musicians of jazz, East/West fusion interested in Indian rhythm. Tel: (212) 724-7223.

Baltimore-Washington: Grant Menefee's studio of drumming. B.M. Berklee College of Music. All styles and levels. Tel: (410) 747-STIX.

Drumset and Brazilian percussion. **Pandeiro**. **Mario Monaco**, tel: (718) 274-9809, fax: (917) 757-9225.

Mark Zonder of Fates Warning is accepting students in the Long Island NY area. Tel: (877) 688-2221.

Drumset and Percussion. Private lessons. Group conga classes. Jazz ensembles. Professional Music, 677 Passaic Avenue, Nutley, NJ 07110. Tel: (973) 661-4885.

NYC Drummers: Study with **John Sarracco**, one of the most knowledgeable pros in the NY area. Accepting only the serious-minded for drum instruction **the professional way**. Manhattan and Staten Island studio locations. (718) 351-4031.

Wanted

Wanted: original Giorgini **Udu** drums. Mbwata, Udongo 2, and handmade models wanted. Matthew, (973) 699-4537, uduman@hotmail.com.

Vintage Drums—Immediate cash for Gretsch, K Zildjian, Ludwig, Rogers, Slingerland, Leedy, **Tel: (800) 729-3111,** or (641) 693-3611, **vintagedrum@lisco.com.**

Miscellaneous

New! Video clips, free drum lessons, drum videos, monthly giveaways at Dave Bedrock's americandrumschool.com.

Www.tigerbill.com: expert advice, products, resources, and talk about drums, drumming, and percussion.

Www.MusiciansContact.com. Need work? Paying jobs and resumes online. Thousands of satisfied members since 1969, tel: (818) 888-7879.

Musicians National Referral: Where pro musicians and bands connect. World's largest, most preferred referral. Ask about our lifetime membership. Tel: (800) 366-4447. Www.musicianreferral.com.

The Drum Bum: T-Shirts and gifts. Www.drumbum.com.

Vintage Showcase

For Sale

Vintage Photo Catalog! Download from our Web site. Ludwig, Slingerland, and more. Money-back guarantee. Always buying and trading. Visa/MC. Vintage Drum Center, 2243 Ivory Drive, Libertyville, IA 52567, tel: (800) 729-3111 or (641) 693-3611. **Www.vintagedrum.com.**

Restoring drums? Get expert advice. Vintage Drum Center Consultation Services. Www.vintagedrum.com/restore.htm.

A Drummer's Tradition features an incredible collection of vintage drums for sale. Visit our shop in San Rafael, California, or check our Web site at www.adrummerstradition.com for weekly updates. We are always buying! Call 10–6 PST, Mon–Sat, tel: (415) 458-1688, fax: (415) 458-1689.

BackBeat Drums Vintage & Restored drums, cymbals, stands, and parts. **Tel: (208) 265-4336**, www.backbeatdrums.com.

Vintage: Snares, sets, singles, cymbals, hardware, logos, and trades. Look/see, www.drumatix.com.

Www.drumschool.com. New-Used-Buy-Sell-Trade all brands since 1945. 300 sets, 600 snares. (800) 810-Drum. Free T-Shirt with every purchase.

Wm. F. Ludwig II autobiography just released! Rogers book, Slingerland book, and other drum history publications. Rebeats Vintage Drum Products, PO Box 6, Alma, MI 48801. Tel: (989) 463-4757, www.rebeats.com.

Vintage Drummer Magazine: Vintage drums, interviews, drum shows, and more. Full color! Issued quarterly. $24 U.S., $30 Canada, $36 international (air mail). VDM, 120 Deerwood Circle, Smyrna, GA 30082. Credit cards accepted. **(770) 438-0844, www.vintagedrummer.com.**

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Immediate cash—Gretsch, K Zildjians, Ludwig, Rogers, Slingerland, Leedy. Vintage Drum center. Tel: (800) 729-3111, or (641) 693-3611, **vintagedrum@lisco.com**.

Miscellaneous

Www.vintagelogos.com. Vintage-style logos for kick drums. Free catalog. Tel: (513) 351-0075.

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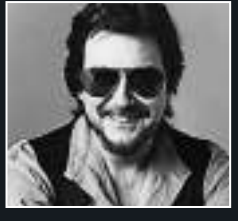

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Talk About A Natural Finish!

Tracy Moll of Whitmore Lake, Michigan plays drums in a glam-rock band called Sissy. Each member of the band takes a distinctive character during performances. Tracy's character is a cavewoman drummer (natch!) called Tringo Bam Bam.

To further the image of her character, Tracy has covered her anonymous drumkit in fake fur, attached to the drums with leather thongs. Plastic vines add a "jungle" touch, while a set of real bull horns fitted with sound-activated lights provide a unique feature. And then there's the bone....

"You might think the fur would muffle the drums," says Tracy. "But they're *loud*. It's a perfect visual and acoustic combination for Tringo Bam Bam to play on."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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